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TEX



Alexander Teixeira de Mattos

TEX

A CHAPTER IN THE LIFE
OF

ALEXANDER TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS

BY
STEPHEN McKENNA



NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1922

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PRINTED IN U. S. A.

VAIL-BALLOU COMPANY
BINGHAMTON AND NEW YORK

To
ALFRED SUTRO

I dedicate to you this slight tribute to the memory of our friend. You were the luckier, in knowing him the longer. I shall be more than content if you find, in reading this book, as I found in reading his letters again, that he has returned to us even for a moment and that a whim of his language or an echo of his laughter has recreated the triple alliance which he founded.

I trust also you may be long without finding out the devil that there is in a bereavement. After love it is the one great surprise that life preserves for us. Now I don't think I can be astonished any more.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON: *Letters*.

TEX

Alexander Teixeira de Mattos

I

"A great translator," one friend wrote of Teixeira, *"is far more rare than a great author."*

Judged by the quality and volume of his work, by the range of foreign languages from which he translated and by the perfection of the English in which he rendered them, Teixeira was incontestably the greatest translator of his time. Throughout Great Britain and the United States his name has long been held in honour by all who have watched, cheering, as the literature of France and Belgium, of Germany and the Netherlands, of Denmark and Norway strode along the broad viaduct which his labours had, in great part, established.

Of the man, apart from his name, little has been made public. His love of laughing at himself might prompt him to say: "When

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you write my *Life and Letters* . . . ”; but his modesty and his humour would have been perturbed in equal measure by the vision of a solemn biography and a low-voiced press. “I was a little bit underpraised before,” he once confessed; “I’m being a little bit overpraised now.” Since the best of himself went impartially into all that he wrote, his conscience could never be haunted by the recollection of shoddy workmanship, even in the days before he had a reputation to jeopardize; nor, when he had won recognition, could his head be turned by the announcement that he had created a masterpiece. If he enjoyed the consciousness of having filled the English treasury with the literary spoils of six countries, he dissembled his enjoyment. In so far as he wished to be remembered at all, it was not as a man of letters, but as a friend, a connoisseur of life, a man of sympathy unaging and zest unstaled, a lover of simple jests, a laughing philosopher. Of their charity, he wished those who loved him to have masses said for the repose of his soul; he would have been tortured by the thought that, in life or death, he had brought unhappiness

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to any one or that, dead or living, he had prompted any one to discuss him with pomposity. "Are you not being a little solemn?" was a question that alternated with the advice: "Cultivate a pococurantist attitude to life."

"If there had been no *Alice in Wonderland*," said another friend, "it would have been necessary for Tex to create her."

Those who knew the translator of Fabre and Ewald, of Maeterlinck and Couperus only by his awe-inspiring name must detect in this a hint that Alexander Teixeira de Mattos had a lighter side to his nature; the suspicion can best be established or laid by the evidence of his own letters.

The present volume is an attempt to sketch the man in outline for those readers who have recognized his talent in scholarship without guessing his genius for friendship. "The apostles are not all dead," he wrote, in criticism of the legends that were growing up around the men of the nineties; "many of them are your living contemporaries; you could, if you like, receive at first hand their memories of their dead fellows." . . . It is the purpose of this sketch to present one

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'apostle' as he revealed himself to one of his disciples. A biography and bibliography will be found in the appropriate works of reference. Only a single chapter has been attempted here; of those who knew him during the nineties, which he loved so well and of which he preserved the tradition so faithfully, perhaps one will write that earlier chapter and describe Teixeira in the position which he took up on their outskirts. And one better qualified than the present writer should paint this sphinx of the bridge-table, with his perversity of declaration and his brilliance of play. "You have made your contract," admitted a friend who was partnering him for the first time; "but . . . but . . . but *why* that declaration?" "I wanted to see your expression," answered Teixeira with the complacency of a man who did not greatly mind whether he won or lost, but abominated a dull game. Those who knew him all his life may feel, with the writer, that the last half-dozen years constitute, naturally and dramatically, a chapter by themselves. They are the period of his literary recognition and, unhappily, of his physical decline; of his emergence from

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seclusion; of his first public services and his last private friendships.

By 1914 Teixeira stood in the forefront of English translators; and, through his labours, translation had won a place in the forefront of English literature. Almost simultaneously with the outbreak of war, he was attacked by the heart-affection that ultimately killed him; and the record of this period is the record of an invalid. Ill-health notwithstanding, he offered his energy and ability to the country of his adoption; and, in an emergency war-department largely staffed by men of letters, the most retiring of them all became enmeshed in the machinery of government. From his marriage until the war, Teixeira had lived an almost monastic life, only relaxing his rule of solitary work in favour of the bridge-table. Once set in the midst of appreciative friends, this sham recluse found himself entertaining and being entertained, joining new clubs, indulging his old inscrutable sociability and almost overcoming his former shyness.

For three-and-a-half out of these last seven years, one of Teixeira's colleagues worked

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with him almost daily at the same table in the same room of the same department. The rare separations due to leave or illness were countered by an almost daily correspondence, conducted in the spirit of an intimate and elaborate game; and, when the work of the department ended, the letters—sometimes interrupted by a diary or suspended for a meeting—kept the intimacy unbroken.

So written, they are as personal, as discursive and—to a stranger—as full of allusion as the long-sustained conversation of two friends. It is to be hoped that, in their present form, they are at least not obscure; of these, and of all, letters it must not be forgotten that the writer was not counting his words for a telegram nor selecting his subjects for later publication.

From his half of the correspondence—in a life untouched by drama—Teixeira's personality may be left to reconstruct itself. Not every side of his character is revealed, for an interchange conducted primarily as a game afforded him few opportunities of exhibiting his serene philosophy and meditative bent. The absence of all calculation from

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his mind—a part of his refusal to grow up—may, for want of counter-availing ballast, be interpreted as flippancy. And, as the man was greater than the word he wrote and the word he translated, his letters have to be supplied by imagination with some of the radiance which he shed over preposterous story and trivial jest. Charm, which is so hard to analyse in the living, is yet harder to recapture from the dead; but, if the record of a single friendship can suggest loyalty, courage, generosity and tenderness, if a whimsical turn of phrase can indicate humour, patience and an infinite capacity for providing and receiving enjoyment, Teixeira's letters will preserve, for those who did not know him, the fragrance of spirit recognized and remembered by all who did.

II

In the autumn of 1914 a censorship department was improvised in the office of the National Service League. A press-gang of two, working the clubs of London and the colleges of Oxford, established the nucleus of a staff; and the first recruits were given, as their earliest duty, the task of bringing in more recruits. As the department had been formed to examine the commercial correspondence of neutrals and enemies, the first qualification of a candidate was a knowledge of languages; and, in the preliminary search for recruits, Alfred Sutro convinced the friend who had succeeded him in translating Maeterlinck that a man who was equally at home in English, French, German, Flemish, Dutch and Danish, with a smattering of ecclesiastical Latin, was too valuable to be spared. Teixeira joined the growing brotherhood of lawyers, dons and business men in Palace Street, Westminster, advising on intercepted letters and cables, curtailing the activities of traders

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in contraband, assimilating the procedure of a government department and being paid stealthily each week, like a member of some criminal association, with a furtive bundle of notes.

It was his first experience of the public service, almost his only taste of responsibility; and it marked the end of the cloistered life. Though he brought to his new work a varied knowledge of affairs, Teixeira had participated but little in them since his marriage in 1900. The friends of his youth, when he was living in the Temple,—John Gray and Ernest Dowson, William Wilde (whose widow he married) and William Campbell,—such acquaintances as Oscar Wilde and Max Beerbohm, Robert Ross and Bernard Shaw, Leonard Smithers and Frank Harris, were for the most part scattered or dead; and, though he kept touch with J. T. Grein, Edgar Jepson, Alfred Sutro and a few more, he seemed at this time, after Campbell's death, to lack opportunity and inclination for making new friends.

His gregarious years, and the varied experience which they brought, belonged to an

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earlier period. Coming from Amsterdam to London in 1874 at the age of nine, the son of a Dutch father and an English mother, Teixeira¹ placed himself under instruction with Monsignor Capel and was received into the Holy Roman Catholic Church. In blood, faith and nationality, the Dutch Protestant of Portuguese-Jewish extraction had thus passed through many vicissitudes before he married an Irish wife, became a British citizen and died a Catholic. Traces of the Jew survived in his appearance; of the Dutchman in his speech; and his intellectual and racial mixed ancestry was betrayed by a cosmopolitan outlook. Ignorant of many prejudices that are the native Briton's birthright, he remained ever aloof from the passions of British thought and speech. If he respected, at least he could not share the conventional enthusiasms nor associate himself with the con-

¹The Jonkheer Alexander Louis Teixeira de Mattos san Paio y Mendes. The family was Jewish in origin and was driven from Portugal by the persecution of the Holy Office. Teixeira was naturalized a British subject in the middle of the war and gave up his Dutch title. Even before this, he had contracted his full style to Alexander Teixeira de Mattos on ceremonial occasions, to A. Teixeira in departmental correspondence and to Tex or T. in letters to his friends.

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ventional judgements of his new countrymen. He wrote of his neighbours among whom he had lived for more than forty years, with an unaffected sense of remoteness, as "the English"; after his naturalization, he was fond of talking, tongue in cheek, about what "we English" thought and did; but, in the last analysis, he embodied too many various strains to favour any single nationality.

After being educated at the Kensington Catholic Public School and at Beaumont, Teixeira worked for some time in the City and was rescued for literature by J. T. Grein, who made him secretary of the Independent Theatre. By his work as a translator and as the London correspondent of a Dutch paper, he lived precariously until his renderings of Maeterlinck, whose official translator he became with *The Double Garden*, called public attention to a new quality of scholarship. Though he flirted with journalism, as editor of *Dramatic Opinions* and of *The Candid Friend*, and with publishing, in connection with Leonard Smithers, translation was the business of his life until he entered government service. He is best known for his ver-

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sion of Fabre's natural history, which he lived to complete and which he himself regarded as his greatest achievement, for the later plays and essays of Maeterlinck, for the novels and stories of Ewald and for the novels of Couperus. These, however, formed only a part of his output; and his bibliography includes the names of Zola, Châteaubriand, de Tocqueville, President Kruger, Maurice Leblanc, Madame Leblanc, Streuvels and many more. One work alone ran to more than a million words; and he married on a commission to translate what he called "the longest book in any language".

The improvised censorship was not long suffered to function unmolested. The home secretary, learning that his majesty's mails were being opened without due authority, warned the unorthodox censors that they were incurring a heavy fine for each offence and advised them to regularize their position. Simultaneously, the Customs were thrown into difficulty and confusion,¹ by the proclama-

¹ I quote from Chapter VII of *While I Remember*, where the genesis of the department is described, though only from hearsay.

ation of the king in council, forbidding all trade with the enemy: in the absence of records, investigation and an intelligence department, it was impossible to say whether goods cleared from London would ultimately reach enemy destination; and the censors who were watching the cable and wireless operations of Dutch and Scandinavian importers seemed the natural advisers to approach. At this point the embryonic department, which had risen from the ashes of the National Service League, joined with a licensing delegation from the Customs to form the War Trade Department and Trade Clearing House.

Drifting about Westminster from Palace Street to Central Buildings, from Central Buildings to Broadway House and from Broadway House to Lake Buildings, St. James' Park, the War Trade Intelligence Department, as it came to be called, was made the advisory body to the Blockade Department of the Foreign Office, with Lord Robert Cecil as its parliamentary chief, Sir Henry Penson, of Worcester College, as its chairman, and H. W. C. Davis, of Balliol, as its

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deputy-chairman. Teixeira, as the head of the Intelligence Section, controlled the supply of advice on the export of "prohibited commodities" to neutral countries; as a member of the Advisory Board, he came later to share in responsibility for the department as a whole. Among his colleagues, not already named, were "Freddie" Browning, the first organizer of the department, O. R. A. Simpkin, now Public Trustee, H. B. Betterton, now a member of parliament, Michael Sadleir, the novelist, R. S. Rait, the Scottish Historiographer-Royal, John Palmer, the dramatic critic, and G. L. Bickersteth, the translator of Carducci.

When the department came to an end, Teixeira resumed his interrupted task of translation, which had, indeed, never been wholly abandoned; his daily programme during the war was to work at home from 5.0 a. m. till 8.0 a. m. and in his department from 10.0 a. m. till 6.0 p. m. or 7.0 p. m., then to play bridge for an hour at the Cleveland Club, returning home in time for a light dinner and an early bed.¹

¹ Even in Teixeira's wide reading there were occasional gaps;

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Leisure, when at last it came to him, was not to be long enjoyed: early in 1920, a further break in health compelled him to undertake a rest-cure, first at Crowborough and then in the Isle of Wight. He returned to Chelsea in the spring of 1921 and spent the summer and autumn working in London or staying with friends in the country, to all appearances better than he had been for some years, though in play and work alike he had now to walk circumspectly. Towards the end of the year he went to Cornwall for the winter and collapsed from *angina pectoris* on 5 December 1921.

In a life of nearly fifty-seven years Teixeira escaped almost everything that could be considered spectacular. Happy in the devotion of his wife and the love of his friends, unshaken in the faith which he had embraced

and, until I brought it to his notice, he was unacquainted with the celebrated life of Sir Christopher Wren by Mr. E. Clerihew and Mr. G. K. Chesterton:

'Sir Christopher Wren

Said, "I am going to dine with some men.

"If anybody calls

"Say I am designing St. Paul's."'

After reading it, Teixeira's nightly valediction as he left for his bridge club was: "I think . . . yes, I think I shall design St. Paul's for an hour or two."

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and untroubled by the misgivings and melancholy that assail a temperament less serene, he faced the world with a manner of gentle understanding and a philosophy of almost universal toleration. His only child—a boy—died within a few hours of birth; Teixeira was troubled for years by ill-health; he was never rich and seldom even assured of a comfortable income. Nevertheless his temper or faith gave him power to extract more amusement from his sufferings than most men derive from the plentitude of health and fortune. Of a malady new even to his experience he writes: "Is death imminent? Why do I always have the rarer disorders?" He loved life to the end—the world was always "God's dear world" to him—; to the end, he, who had known so many of the world's waifs, continued forbearing to all but the censorious. "I was taught very early in life," he writes, "to make every allowance for men of any genius, whereas you look for a public-school attitude towards all and sundry. . . . You see, if one cared to take the pains, one could make you detest pretty well everybody you know and like. For everybody has a mean,

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petty, shabby, cowardly side to him; and one had only to tell you of what the man in question chooses to keep concealed." . . .

"Life," said Samuel Butler, "is like playing a violin solo in public and learning the instrument as one goes on." Those who met Teixeira only in his later years must have felt that he was born a master of his instrument; it is not to be imagined that there could ever have been a time when he was ignorant of the grace, the urbanity, the consideration and the gusto that mark off the artist in life from his fellows.

III

Though his letters contain scattered references to the principles which he followed in translation, Teixeira could never be persuaded to publish his complete and considered theory. His excuse was that he had never been able to write more than eight hundred words of original matter, a disability that once threatened him with disaster when he was invited to lecture on the science and art of bridge to the members of a club formed for mutual improvement and the pursuit of learning. After being entertained at a fortifying banquet, Teixeira delivered his eight-hundred words. As, at the end of the two and three-quarter minutes which his reading occupied, the audience seemed ready and even anxious for more, he read his address a second time. Later, he began in the middle; later still, he ran disgracefully from the hall.

The method which he followed in translation has, therefore, to be reconstructed from

the internal evidence of his books and from personal experience in collaboration.

"I shall not," wrote Matthew Arnold in criticizing Newman, "in the least concern myself with theories of translation as such. But I advise the translator not to try 'to rear on the basis of the *Iliad*, a poem that shall affect our countrymen as the original may be conceived to have affected its natural hearers'; and for this simple reason, that we cannot possibly tell *how* the *Iliad* 'affected its natural hearers.' "

The first quality that distinguishes Teixeira from most of the translators whose work and methods of work have swelled the controversial literature of translation is that he confined himself to modern authors. Unacquainted with Greek and little versed in Latin, he was never faced with the difficulty of having to imagine how an original work affected its natural hearers. Maeterlinck and Couperus were his personal friends; Fabre and Ewald, who predeceased him, were older contemporaries; it is only with de Tocqueville and Châteaubriand that he had to gauge the intellectual atmosphere of an

earlier generation. In judging whether his English rendering left on the minds of English readers the same impression as the original had left on its "natural hearers", he had a court of appeal always available; and, while the English reader is "lulled into the illusion that he is reading an original work", the foreign author can testify to the fidelity with which his text has been followed and his spirit reproduced. "What a magnificent translation *The Tour* is!" Couperus writes; "what a most charming little book it has become! I am in raptures over it and have read it and reread it all day and have had tears in my eyes and have laughed over it. You may think it silly of me to say all this; but it has become an exquisitely beautiful work in its English form. My warmest congratulations!"

To achieve this illusion, Teixeira began his literary life with the most essential quality of a translator: an equal knowledge of the language that was to be translated and of the language into which he was translating it. English and Dutch came to him by inheritance; French and Flemish, German and

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Danish he added by study; and throughout his working life he was incessantly sharpening, polishing and adding to his tools. Limitless reading refreshed a vast vocabulary; meticulous accuracy refined his meanings and justified his usages. His dictionaries were annotated freely; and the margins of his manuscripts were filled with challenges and suggestions for his friends to consider, until his own exacting fastidiousness had at last been satisfied. Apart from professional lexicographers, it would have been difficult to find a man with more words in current use; it would have been almost impossible to find one who employed them with nicer precision. Learning sat too lightly on his shoulders to make him vain of it, but no one could hear or correspond with him without realizing the presence of a purist; he seldom quoted, mistrusting his memory, confessed himself an amateur in colloquial dialogue and refused with equal obstinacy to venture on English metaphors and English field-sports. "I do not know the difference between a niblick and a foursome," he would protest. "When you say that your withers are unwrung, I do

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not know whether you are boasting or complaining. What are your withers? Have you any, to begin with? Do you 'wring' them or 'ring' them? And why can't you leave them alone?"

Not content with mastering five foreign languages, Teixeira created a new literary English for every new kind of book that he translated. His versions of Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird*, Couperus' *Old People and The Things That Pass*, Fabre's *Hunting Wasps* and Ewald's *My Little Boy* have nothing in common but their exquisite sympathy and scholarship; four different men might have produced them if four men could be found with the same taste, knowledge and diligence. Fabre's ingenuous air of perpetual discovery demanded the style of a grave, grown-up child; Maeterlinck's mystical essays invited a hint of preciosity and aloofness, to suggest that omniscience was expounding infinity through symbols older than time; and the atmospheric sixth-sense of Couperus had to be communicated by a sensitiveness of language that could create pictures and conjure up intangible clouds of discontent, guilty

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terror, suppressed antagonism or universal boredom. In reading the original, Teixeira seemed to steep himself in the personality of his author until he could pass, like a repertory actor, from one mood and expression to another; his own mannerisms are confined to a few easily defended peculiarities of spelling and punctuation.

For a man who must surely have divined that his calibre was unique, Teixeira was engagingly free from touchiness. In translating a book, as in organizing a department, he was magnificently grateful for the word that had eluded him and for the criticism which he had not foreseen. A purist in language and a precisian in everything, he realized that a living style is throttled by too great obedience to rules; but he was afraid, even in dialogue, of unchaining a wind of colloquialism which he might be unable to control; and, in constructing the deliberately artificial speech of his Maeterlinck translations, he recognized that he lacked his readers' age-old familiarity with the English of the Bible. Though his passion for consistency led him to say: "My name ought to

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have been Procrus-Tex," he stretched out both hands for an authority that would justify him in broadening his rule. "I have always spelt judgment without an e in the middle," he declared in 1915, when, with the gravity that characterized his more trivial decisions, he had abandoned violet ink, because it seemed frivolous in war-time, and the long s (ſ), because it bore a Teutonic aspect. "I am too old to change now; and you know my rule, All or None." Four years later he announced: "In future I shall spell 'judgment with an e in the middle. The New English Dictionary favours it; you assure me that it is so spelt in your English prayer-book; and Germany has signed the peace terms."

No comparison with other translators can be attempted until another arise with Teixeira's range of languages and his volume of achievement. He himself could never say, within a dozen, how many books he had translated; but in them all he created such an illusion of originality that they are not suspected of being translations until his name is seen. In a wider view, he undermined the

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pretensions of those who boasted that they could never read translations; and, if no one is likely to be found with all his gifts, he at least prepared the way for a new school of translators. It may be hoped that, after the battles which he fought, important foreign authors will not again be sacrificed to illiterate hacks at five-shillings a thousand words: it may even be expected that competent scholars will no longer disdain the task of translating contemporary works. All literary predictions are rash; but there seems little risk in prophesying that Teixeira's renderings of Fabre, Couperus and Maeterlinck will be read as long as the originals.

The tangible fruits of his astonishing industry are only a part of his achievement: it is to him, in company with Constance Garnett, William Archer, Aylmer Maude and the other undaunted pioneers, that English readers owe their escape from the self-satisfied insularity with which they had protected themselves against continental literature. When publishers have been convinced that translations need not be unprofitable and when a conservative public has discov-

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ered that they need not be unreadable, a future generation may be privileged to have prompt access to every noteworthy book in whatsoever language it has been written, without waiting as the present generation has had to wait for an English rendering of Tolstoi, Turgenieff, Dostoieffski and Tchekhov.

In conversation Teixeira took little pleasure in discussing himself; in correspondence he could not help giving himself away. The reader will deduce, from his slow surrender of intimacy, the shyness that ever conflicted with his sociability; the absence of all allusions to his literary work, save when he fancied that a second opinion might help him, is evidence of a personal modesty that amounted almost to unconsciousness of his position in letters. Diffidence and sociability, first conflicting, then joining forces, led him in his departmental work to discuss every problem with a friend; and in all personal relationships, he needed an hourly confidant because everything in life was an adventure to be shared and might be worked in later to the saga with which he strove to

make himself ridiculous for the diversion of his company. "Thus," he writes of a childish freak, "do the elderly amuse themselves for the further amusement of a limited circle." Weighty commissions were assembled, daring expeditions set out under his leadership to choose a dressing-gown for country-house wear; the grey tall-hat with which he surprised one private view of the Royal Academy was no less of a surprise to him and even more of an abiding pleasure. For a year or two afterwards he would telephone on the first of May: "If you will wear your goodish white topper to-day, I will wear mine"; and once, when these conspicuous headpieces were in evidence, he led the way to Covent Garden Market, with the words: "It is not every day that the women of the market see two men in such hats, such coats and such spats, standing before a fruit-stall with their canes crooked over their arms and their yellow gloves protruding from their pockets, consuming the first green figs of the year in the year's first sunshine."

In conversation he once boasted that he was never bored; and, though every man and

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woman at the table volunteered the names of at least six people who would bore him to extinction, the boast was justified in that, however irksome one moment might be, it could always be invested afterwards with the glamour of an eccentric adventure. Somewhere, among his immediate ascendants, there must have been a not too remote ancestor of Peter Pan. On his fifty-sixth birthday, Teixeira was having a party arranged for him, with a cake and fifty-six tiny candles; for days beforehand he had been asking for presents of any kind, to impress the other visitors in his hotel; and, if he knew one joy greater than receiving presents, it was finding an excuse to give them.

With the heart of a child in all things, he had the child's quality of being frightened by small pains and undaunted by great; a cut finger was an occasion for panic, but the threat of blindness found him indomitable. Herein he was supported throughout life by the faith which he had acquired in boyhood and which he preserved until his death. "I save my temper," he once wrote, "by not discussing religion except with Catholics or

politics except with liberals. There's room for discussion in the *nuances*; there's too much room for it with those who call my black white." . . . While it was generally known among his friends that he was a devout Catholic, only a few were allowed to see how much reliance he placed in religion; and he would grow impatient with what he considered a morbid protestant passion for worrying at something that for him had been immutably settled.

In political debates he would only join at the prompting of extreme sympathy or extreme exasperation. His native feeling for the Boers in the Transvaal was little shared in England during the South African war; and his loathing for English misrule in Ireland was too strong to be ventilated acceptably among the people whom he met most commonly in London. His connection with the Legitimist cause came to an end with the outbreak of war: though he had hitherto delighted in penetrating between the sentries at St. James' Palace and placarding the wall with an appeal to all loyal subjects of the rightful king, he was unable to continue his

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allegiance when Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria became an enemy alien.

Legitimacy and Catholicism, apart from other claims on his regard, gratified a love for ceremonial and tradition that would have been more incongruous in a liberal if Teixeira's whole equipment of beliefs, practices and preferences had not been a collection of incongruities. Though he detested militarism, he could never understand why the English civilians omitted to uncover to the colours; hating pomposity, he enjoyed the grand manner in address and, on being greeted by a peer as "my dear sir," replied "my dear lord" in a formula beloved by Disraeli. As a relief to an accuracy of expression which he himself called Procrustean and pernickety, he would transform any word that he thought would look or sound more engaging for a little mutilation. It was a bad day for the English of his letters when he read Heine and entered into competition for the most torturing play upon words; his case became hopeless when he was introduced to a couple of friends who could pun with him in four or five languages. It was this

bent of mind that may justify the description of him¹ as the son of Edward Lear and the grandson of Charles Lamb.

Underlying the whimsical humour of his letters and peeping through the mock solemnity of his speech was a young child's concern for the welfare of his friends: himself never growing up, he never outgrew his generous delight in any success that came to them; their ill-health and sorrow were harder to bear than his own; and he shewed a child's impulsive generosity in offering all he had in comfort. Sympathy, help, experience and advice were at hand for whosoever would take them: he had too long lived precariously to forget the tragedy of those who failed and failed again; he knew life too well to grow impatient with those who failed through no one's fault but their own.

Love of life, enduring to the end, knowledge of life, increasing every day, combined to join this heart of a child to the experience of an old man. As a connoisseur of food and wine, as of style and manner, he belonged to a generation that ranked life as the greatest

¹ From the notice of his death in *The Times*.

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of the fine arts. To lunch with him was to receive a liberal education in gastronomy, though his course of personal instruction sometimes broke down for lack of material: from time to time he would announce with jubilation that he had discovered some rare vintage in some unknown restaurant; a party would be organized to sample it, only to be informed that the last bottle had been consumed by Mr. Teixeira the day before.

As an explorer, he remained, to his last hour, at the age when a boy lingers rapturously before one shop after another, enjoying all impartially, sharing his enjoyment with every passer-by, confident that life is an unending vista of glittering shop-windows and that the day must somehow be long enough for him to take them all in.

IV

Max Beerbohm's caricature of Teixeira, discovered later—to the subject's delight—in the waiting-room of an eminent gynaecologist, emphasizes the most strongly marked natural and acquired characteristics of his appearance: a big nose and a liking for the fantastic in dress. There is hardly space, in the drawing, even for the tiny hat of the music-hall comedian, so devastating is the sweep of that nose, outward from the lips, up and round, annihilating forehead and cranium until it merges in the nape of the neck. Of the dress no more need be said than that it looks like a valiant attempt to live up to the nose.

As this caricature has not been published in any collection of Max Beerbohm's drawings, it was probably unknown to most of those who were brought into the Intelligence Section of the War Trade Intelligence Department, there to be introduced to its head, to receive the handshake and bow of a courtier and to

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wonder how Tenniel could have drawn the old sheep in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass* without Teixeira as a model. Tall and broad-shouldered, with thick black hair and a white face, tortoise-shell-rimmed spectacles, and a cigarette in a holder, taciturn, impassive and unsmiling, Teixeira never failed to conceal that he was more shy than his visitor. With articulation as beautifully clear as his writing and in words not less exquisitely chosen than the language of his books, he would introduce the newcomer to those with whom he was to work. Messengers would be despatched to bring an additional chair and table. In the resultant confusion, the immense, silent figure would walk away with a heavy tread, to find that a pile of papers, two feet high, had risen like an Indian mango where there had been but six inches a moment before. A voice of authority, rolling its r's like the rumble of distant artillery, would telephone for more messengers; in time the pile would dwindle until the spectacles and then the nose and then the cigarette-holder were visible. In time, too, the newcomer re-

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covered from his fright and set about learning the business of the department.

It was a pleasant surprise to hear "this Olympian creature", as Stevenson called Prince Florizel, addressed by Sutro as "Tex"; and, although the first terror was disabling, even the newcomer realized that every one in the section seemed happy. The Olympian creature never lost his temper, he condescended to jokes and invented nicknames; the appalling gravity was found to be a mask for shyness and a disguise for bubbling absurdity.

In the summer of 1915 the machinery of the blockade was still making. The department, overworked and understaffed, was inadequately housed in a corner of Central Buildings, Westminster. In the autumn it moved to Broadway House, in Tothill Street; and one newcomer was invited to sit at Teixeira's table as deputy-head of the section. Thenceforth, until the armistice, we worked together daily, save when one or other was on leave or ill and during the early summer of 1917 when I was sent to Washington. The office, changing almost weekly in personnel,

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underwent reconstruction when the blockade was modified in 1918: Teixeira became secretary to the department; I succeeded him as head of the intelligence section; and, when I left in 1919, he stayed behind to help in dismantling the old machine and in assembling a new one to supply economic information to the peace conference.

Our correspondence for the last three years of the war was restricted to the times when one of us was away. These absences grew more frequent as Teixeira exchanged one illness for another. His letters present him as a government servant rejoicing in his work, tingling with the new sense of new responsibility and, "from his circumstances having been always such, that he had scarcely any share in the real business of life", suggesting irresistibly a comparison with Dr. Johnson at the sale of his friend Thrall's brewery, "bustling about, with an ink-horn and pen in his button-hole, like an exciseman". So much of them, however, is taken up with departmental business that I have drawn sparingly upon them.

V

The first five months of 1916 were a time of relatively good health for Teixeira; and our correspondence contains little more than an invitation, which he acknowledged in departmental language.

I wrote:

Tuesday, Jan. 4th, 1916.

*Though long I've wished to bid you come and
dine,*

*Your way of life stood ever in the way;
For you, I gather, go to bed at nine
And rise at five (or five-fifteen) next day.*

*Yet Tuesday brings my chance. At half-past
eight*

*I go to guard my king; but, ere I go,
With meat and wine I purpose to inflate
My sagging stomach for an hour or so.*

*Then will you join me? Seven o'clock, I think:
The Mausoleum Club is fairly near:
Whate'er your heart desire of food and drink,
And any kind of clothes you choose to wear.*

S. McK.

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We should be glad, replies Teixeira, if this application could come up again in say a fortnight's time.

A. T.

Trade Clearing House.

When next I was summoned for duty as a special constable, the application was submitted again; and Teixeira dined with me at the Reform Club. Later in the year, though he had been warned by William Campbell, the greatest friend of his middle years, that a man who laughed so much would never be admitted to membership, I was allowed to propose him as a candidate; and from the day of his election he became one of the most popular figures both in the card-room and in the south-east corner of the big smoking-room, where his most intimate associates gathered.

His hours of work, to which the first stanza refers, have already been mentioned; his methods call for a word or two of description. The library in Cheltenham Terrace looked out over the Duke of York's School and was lined with book-cases wherever windows,

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fire-place or door permitted. The furniture consisted of a sofa, which was used for hat-boxes and more books; a writing-table, which was used for anything but writing; a revolving book-case, filled with works of reference; and the editorial chair from the office of *The Candid Friend*. Seating himself in dressing-gown and slippers, between the fire-place and the revolving book-case, Teixeira dug himself into position: a despatch-box under his feet raised his knees to an angle at which he could balance a dictionary upon them, with its edge resting on a miniature bureau; on the dictionary rested a blotting-pad; and every book that he needed was in reach either of his hand or an elongated pair of "lazy-tongs"; scissors, string, sealing-wax, india-rubber and knives were ingeniously and menacingly suspended from nails in the revolving book-case; on the top stood cigarettes, matches, a paste-pot and a vast copper ash-tub; and the colour of his violet carpet was chosen to conceal the occasional splashings of a violet-ink pen. With a telephone on one side to put him in touch with the outside world and with a bell on the other to secure his morning coffee,

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Teixeira could work without moving until evicted by force.

In the beginning of June, he was ordered to Malvern.

No news, he writes on the 10th, except that I have arrived and had some tea. . . .

There are hawthorns at Malvern and rhododendrons of -dra but also the most bloodthirsty hills. And there was an officer in the train who told me that the feeling in Franst was most "optimistic".

The proprietress of this hotel pronounces my name Teisheira. This must be looked into.

I s'pose I'm enjoying myself, he writes next day. I feel very restless.

[My cook], I forgot to tell you, was mounting guard over the dispatch-box like a very sentinel, with hands duly folded: a most proper spectacle. I nearly died, but not entirely, hunting for my porter up and down the length of the longest train you ever saw (I am sure this must be correct, in view of the fact that you never did see this particular train). . . .

This hotel is not so uncomfortable: I slept eight hours; I have a writing-table in my room; my bath was too hot to get into; these are signs of human comfort, are not they? Nor is the

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food nasty. Fortunately, there is not much of it. I ordered me a bottle of Berncastler Doctor. They brought me Liebfraumilch. I waved it away, saying that hock was acid and gave me gout. Then, persuaded to be a Christian, I sent one running after it before the doctor was opened and drank two glasses; and it was delicious; and I have no gout.

Why I sit boring you with this dull stuff I do not know: it is certainly not worth including in the Life and Letters.

Two days of solitude set him athirst for companionship.

Good-morning, fair sir, he writes on 12. 6. 16. I hope this finds you as it leaves me at present, a little improved in health. But I would not wish my worst enemy the weariness from which I am suffering. . . . Picture me buying useless things so that I may exchange a word with a shopman; for no one talks to me here. Also the weather is bitterly cold.

And next day:

I have . . . talked at length to a highly intelligent Dane, with a massy pair of calves that do credit to his pastoral country. But he has returned to town this morning.

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They play very low at the club, fortunately, for I lost 13/-, which would have been £10, had I been playing R. A. C. points. Also they make me too late to dress for dinner, which doesn't matter: nothing matters in this world.

For the rest, I have reason to think that I shall begin to cheer up from to-morrow and to remain cheerful until Saturday. That is "speech-day"—I presume at Malvern College—when I expect to see an awful invasion of horribobble papas and mammas.

Bless you.

The hoped-for cheerfulness has not yet arrived, he laments on 14. 6. 16. I live in one of the most tragic of worlds. But . . . I have had more conversation. The place of the Dane with the fatted calves . . . has been taken by a parson, a passon, a parsoon, an elderly parsoon with the complete manner of the late Mr. Penley in The Private Secretary: he would like to give every German a good, hard slap, I am sure. He is a much-travelled man; and his ignorance of every place which he has visited is thoroughly entertaining. . . .

I am becoming popular at the club: they took 12/- out of me yesterday. I must set my teeth and get it back though.

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The influx of odious parents, he writes on 18. 6. 16, with their loathy, freckled criminals of offspring has flustered the waiters and is spoiling all my meals. What I do now is to change for dinner after all and come in exactly an hour late for meals. They have some way of keeping the food—such as it is—piping hot; and so I do not suffer unduly for avoiding the sight of some, at least, of the carrot-headed boys and their thick-ankled sisters. . . .

Ah well! I can begin to count the days until I am back among you; and a glad day that will be for me! Nobody in the world, I think, hates either rest or enjoyment so much as I do.

Good-bye. I am going for a walk. I tell you frankly, I am going for a walk. I tell you this frankly. . . .

On Teixeira's return to the department, our correspondence was suspended until I went to Cornwall for a week's leave in August. When I wrote in praise of my surroundings, he replied with a warning:

You are probably too young ever to have heard of . . . a play-actress . . . who brought a breach of promise action . . . and earned the then record damages of £10,000. She took a cottage

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somewhere the other day and brought her mother to live in it. The mother said, "This is just the sort of place I like; I shall be happy here," then fell down the stairs and was dead in half an hour. . . .

. . . Remember me to the Atlantic. . . .

The next letter contained a story from Ireland:

'Sligo, 18 August 1916.

. . . Here, in this most distressful country, we are about to experience again the blessings of coercion, administered by Duke, K. C., and Carson, high priest of the cult. In Sligo, the other day, two ladies treating each other in a public-house, the barman intervened at the tenth drink, saying:

"Stop it now; ye can't have any more; troth, I won't sarve ye again. Don't ye know it's Martial Law that's on the people?"

Whereupon one of them enquired of the other:

"For the love of God, Mrs. Murphy, what's he talking about at all? Who's Martial Law?"

To which her friend replied sotto voce:

"Whist, don't be showing your ignorance, ma'am! Don't ye know he's a brother of Bonar Law's?" . . .

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As official papers accompanied every letter, a trace of departmental style is occasionally visible in private notes:

War Trade Intelligence Department.

23 August, 1916.

"Harry Edwin" ate a grouse last night and drank many glasses of port. You can imagine the sort of grumpy commensal that he is to-day.

A. T.

"Harry Edwin."

To see.

23. 8. 16.

Seen and approved.

H. E. P.

. . . Don't overbathe, he adds as a postscript. Why be so reckless? You remind me of the London city "clurks" who arrive in Switzerland one evening, run straight up the Matterhorn the next morning. I believe that two per cent of them do not drop dead.

The Sehr Hochwohlgeboren und Verdammtter Graf Zeppelin, he writes on 25. 18. 16, did some damage last night at Greenwich, Blackwall (a power-station) etc. For the rest, no news. I am picking up not wholly unconsidered trifles at the Wellington and benefiting your Uncle

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Reggie pro rata. [Bridge winnings at this time were thriftily exchanged for War Savings Certificates.] *This morning I (pro)-rated the girl . . . at the post-office for not "pushing" those certificates. I said that, whenever any one asked for a penny stamp, she should ask:*

"May we not supply you with one of these?"

It went very well with the audience.

This morning, he writes later, I have bought my thirteenth fifteen-and-sixpennyworth of Uncle Reggie. Mindful of my injunction to "push" the goods, the post-office girl . . . urged me to buy a £19. 7. affair which would be good for £25 in five years' time. Alas! Still, there are hopes.

In his preface to *The Admirable Bashville*, Bernard Shaw explains his reason for throwing it into blank verse: "I had but a week to write it in. Blank verse is so childishly easy and expeditious (hence, by the way, Shakespeare's copious output), that by adopting it I was enabled to do within the week what would have cost me a month in prose." Pressure of work sometimes drove Teixeira to a similar expedient in rimed verse:

Letter just received, he writes in haste on

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26. 8. 16. to acknowledge the account of a bathing mishap:

With great relief at noon I found

That S. McKenna was not drowned.

Many thanks for the pendant to these lovely verses.

P. S. I note—and we all note—he adds—that you never express the wish to see us all again. How different from my Malvern letters! Ah, what a terrible thing is sincerity!

VI

On Holy Saturday, 1917, I was asked by the deputy-chairman whether I would represent the department on the mission which Mr. Balfour was taking to Washington with a view to coordinating the war-organization of Great Britain and the United States.

For the next two months Teixeira and I communicated whenever a bag passed between the British Embassy and the Foreign Office, overflowing into a brief journal betweenwhiles. He also disposed of my varied correspondence with uniform discretion and with a courage that only failed him when unknown mothers asked him if I would stand sponsor to their children.

The enquiries into the cause of your absence, he writes on 12. 4. 17, have been distressing. More people ask if you are ill than if you are being married. The unit of the last idea was Sutro, who then went off to Davis and found out what he wanted to know. . . .

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13 April.

The work is pretty stiff and I doubt if I can make this desultory diary as gossipy as I could have wished. And, after all, it will seem pretty stale and jejune by the time it reaches you. . . .

Your whereabouts are known now in the dept. and will be at the club to-morrow, if any one asks me again. Hitherto great wonder has reigned; but the "no blame attaches to his name" stunt has worked exquisitely.

The figure of Max Beerbohm's caricature is seen in the following paragraph:

I have ordered eight new coloured shirts, bringing the total up to 23. Then I have about a dozen black-and-white shirts; and only seven dress-shirts, I find. This makes 42 in all. My father's theory was that no gentleman should have fewer than eighty shirts to his name. Times have changed; and we are a petty and pettyfogging generation of mankind. On the other hand, I have 33 ties, exclusive of white ties. I feel almost sure that my father did not have so many as that. And I outdo him utterly in boot-trees, of which I have just ordered a pair to be marked "L8" and "R8," meaning thereby that it is my eighth pair. Sursum corda.

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Teixeira believed with almost complete sincerity that he would die on 21 April 1917. The origin of this belief he never explained to me; and I do not know whether he confided it to others. This accounts for the following entry:

Shall I live, I wonder, till the 22nd, to write to you that I am still alive? When I allow my thoughts to dwell upon 21. 4. 17, now but six brief days off, there rises to them the memory of the horrible Widow's Song which Vesta Victoria used to sing. I will start the next page with the chorus; for you, poor young fellow, know nothing of the songs that brightened the Augustan age of the music-halls.

Read and admire:

*He was a good, kind husband,
One of the best of men:
So fond of his home, sweet home,
He never, never wanted to roam.
There he would sit by the fire-side,
Such a chilly man was John!
I hope and trust
There's a nice, warm fire
Where my old man's gone.*

Gallows-humour, my dear executor, gallows-humour!

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16 April.

*Yesterday being a fine day, I have caught cold.
A bad look-out, executor, a bad look-out!
Adieu, cher ami.*

You will observe a brief hiatus, he writes on 19 April, 1917. A letter begun to you on the 16th is reposing in my drawer at the department, where I have not been since then, having succumbed to an attack of bronchitis. And [my doctor] will not let me out till the 21st ("der Tag!") at the earliest.

Der Tag was reached. . .

21 April, 1917.

It was a comfort and a joy to read this morning that your party has arrived safely at Halifax. I propose to pass this bloudie day without any cheap philosophizing. I am about cured of my bronchitis, I think, though fearsomely weak; and, if I "be" to "be" carried off to-day, it'll be a motor-bus or -cab that'll do for me. Look out for a letter from me dated to-morrow. I hope the voyage has done you all the good in the world. . . .

. . . and survived.

22 April, 1917.

Ebbene, caro mio Stefano! You will be able

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to tell your grandchildren that you once knew a man who for twenty years was convinced that he would die on the day when he was fifty-two years and twelve days old and who lived to be fifty-two and thirteen. . . .

Bottomley has turned against the new government and is adumbrating his ideal government. He retains the present foreign secretary, but nominates H. H. A. as lord chancellor and Sir Edward Holden as chancellor of the exchequer. He wants Beresford as minister of blockade. Oof!

Robbie Ross has a story of a German poet, one Oskar Schmidt, "a charming fellow," who, armed with the best letters of recommendation, went to Oxford and spent several agreeable weeks there. The fine flower of his observations was:

"Der Oxfort oontercratuades, dey go apout between a melangolly and a flegma." . . .

24 April, 1917.

Your name appeared in the Times yesterday; and I am now able to read daily, or I hope, shall be, how Mr. McKenna bowed, raised his hat and, escorted by cavalry, took his first cocktail on American soil. I do hope that you are not only having the time of your life but feeling amazingly well. J. pictures you a victim of indiges-

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tion; but I, knowing your justly celebrated strength of character, have no fears on that score. Cura ut valeas.

4 May, 1917.

This is a private-view day. The sun is blazing truculently. I am wearing a new shirt, white with black and yellow lines (the Teixeira colours), and the white hat and all's well in God's dear world.

That these sartorial efforts were not wasted is shewn by the next entry:

5 May, 1917.

. . . *From yesterday's Star:*

"Society Sees the Pictures

"The beautiful spring day induced one Beau Brummel to sport a white box-hat" !!!

VII

In the middle of May I cabled to Teixeira in code, asking him to forward no more letters; and I did not hear from him again until my return to England in the second week of June.

As soon as I was ready to take his place, he went to Harrogate for a cure and remained there for six weeks. For part of the time I took his place in another sense of the phrase. At the end of July the Air Board commandeered my flat; and, until I could find, decorate and furnish another, Teixeira and his wife most kindly placed their house at my disposal. This will explain the following extract:

Harrogate: 15 July, 1917.

Here is the key. Come in when you like, make yourself as comfortable as you can and forgive all deficiencies. I feel a compunction at not having the physical energy to "clear" things a bit for you; but there you are. . . .

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I have started my cure, he writes on 18. 7. 17., which promises to be a most strenuous, arduous and tedious affair. I have to take daily two soda-water tumblers of strong sulphur water and two ordinary tumblers of warm magnesia water; and on alternate days (a) a Nauheim bath and (b) a hot-air bath. . . .

It is raining steadily. This doesn't matter. But that sulphur-water, on an empty stomach, at 8 a.m.! Two-and-twenty ounces of it, hot! The stench of it! It is said to remind one of rotten eggs; but, as I have never smelt a rotten egg, it reminds me of nothing and only suggests hell.¹

Sugar seems to have been more scarce in Harrogate than in London; and Teixeira's appeals and contrivances were always pathetic and sometimes frantic.

My wife did manage to get half a pound of it flung at her head this morning, he writes on 19. 7. 17. I had so entirely forgotten the essential rudeness of the people of Yorkshire that its discovery came upon me as an utter surprise. I amuse myself by overcoming it with smiles. Smiles are unfamiliar symptoms to them and take them aback.

¹ Future letters were dated from 'Hellgate'.

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You may tell Sutro that I have bought a dozen silk collars.

After weary weeks of nauseating treatment, he writes:

It will be an awful sell if this cure ends without doing me good. Still I always hope. Whatever happens I shall want at least a week's after-cure which I should probably take here: simply a rest and air, without any waters or baths. But what is your Cornish date?

I replied, 27. 7. 17.

By this time you will have seen that our minds have been working on parallel lines towards the same conclusion that an after-cure is quite essential. It will suit me perfectly well to stay here until, and including, Friday the 24th, or later if you like. My Cornish arrangements are quite fluid. . . .

For all your pagan pose, he writes, you are a fine old Irish Christian gentleman, as is proved by your suggestion of an after-cure, dictated no doubt at the identical moment when I was writing my answer to it. At any rate, I prefer to think of you as a Christian brother rather than as a Corsican brother. As I said, I shall probably take that after-cure, but take it at Harro-

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gate, which is about as bracing a spot as any in the three kingdoms. To go straight to the sea might set up my rheumatism again, if indeed it is suppressed; there is no sign yet of that desiderandum. . . .

It is necessary to insert my letter of 30. 7. 17 in order to explain Teixeira's reply to it.

I went home for the week-end, I wrote, and travelled up this morning with C. H. C. has a new and most amusing game. It consists of inviting people to stay with him for the week-end and encouraging them to bathe in the river Thames and only disclosing, when the damage has been done, that the bed of that ancient river is richly studded with broken bottles. There was a small boy in the carriage with one badly injured foot as a result of C.'s pleasantry. I did a conspicuous St. Christopher stunt and carried the boy on my shoulders the entire length of the arrival platform at Paddington. . . .

I, Teixeira answers, 30. 7. 17, once carried Willie Crosthwait, then aged 14, the whole length of the Euston departure platform. That beats you (and perhaps caused the best part of my present troubles). He is now an army chaplain; and I sit moaning at Harrogate.

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Ululu!

My eviction took place in the first week of August; and on 3. 8. 17 I wrote to Teixeira:

I am thinking of moving to Chelsea on Tuesday. . . . You may remember a story of Benjamin Jowett in connection with two undergraduates who persisted in staying up at Balliol throughout the Long Vacation. Jowett, by way of gently dislodging them, insisted first that they should attend Chapel daily. The undergraduates grumbled, but obeyed. Jowett, seeing that his first attack had failed, arranged with the kitchen authorities that the food served to these recalcitrant young scholars should be entirely uneatable, and in the course of time their spirit was so much broken that they left him and Balliol in peace. He is reported to have said, as he watched them driving down to the station: "That sort goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting." So with me. I have manfully withstood the stalwart labourers who break walls down all round me throughout the night; but, when the porters are paid off, the maids deprived of their rooms, the hot-water supply disconnected and the gas cut off at the main, I feel that I may retire with dignity and the full honours of war. . . .

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Make yourself as comfortable in Chelsea as you can, he answered on 4. 8. 17. *As at present advised, we return on Wednesday fortnight, the 22nd. . . .*

The days here speed past on wings, thanks to their monotony. Waters at 8; again at 10.30; a bath or baths at 11; lunch at 1.30; a jog-trot drive from 3 to 4; bridge; dinner at 7.30; massage at 9; all this with unfailing regularity. I believe far more in my masseuse (she lives at this house) than in my doctor. It will amuse your father to hear that this genius is prescribing for me in the matter of rheumatism, neuritis and fibrositis in the arm without having once had my shirt off! I make suggestions, at the instance of the masseuse, and he promptly annexes them as his own:

"Tell me, doctor, may I do so-and-so?"

"You are to do so-and-so; and this very day!"

The doctors here generally have the very worst name; but there is nobody to pull them up or show them up.

The place teems with people whom I know and don't want to see.

The rain it raineth every day and all day. . . .

My cure is now over, he writes on 12. 8. 17; it has been long and costly; it has done me no

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good at all. Indeed my main affliction is worse; certain movements of the right arm which were possible with comparative ease before I came down are now nearly impossible. On Saturday, at the final consultation, when I took leave of my doctor and paid him five guineas, he told me for the first time that I have no neuritis but that I have bursitis. All the while, mark you, he has been treating me for fibrositis. It is a consolation to know, however, that I have no arthritis. What I have been having is what the vulgar would call a hi-tiddlyhitis high old time. . . .

A week later I went again to Cornwall on leave.

Do devote yourself, wrote Teixeira, 25. 8. 17, at any rate for the first ten days of your absence, to becoming very well and strong. I have never seen you quite so ill as yesterday and I was infinitely distressed about it. Treat yourself as though you were an exceedingly old man like me. Then when you have entered upon your rejuvenescence you can begin to play pranks with yourself again. . . .

Later he added:

Be careful not to honour the Atlantic with more than one immersion a day. . . .

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And, 30. 8. 17. *I am exceedingly busy, but I am enjoying it all. My health is as bad as ever and I have recovered my famous lead-poisoning hue. I expect you, however, to return with the bloom of roses and the stains of coffee on your cheeks. So make up your mind to sleep and do it. . . .*

In the first week of September there began the most persistent series of air-raids that occurred at any stage during the war.

Last night, Teixeira writes, 5. 9. 17, was made hideous by a pack of confounded Germans who came over London and created no end of a din. I looked out of the window, saw one shell burst in a south-easterly direction, debated whether to go below or remain in bed and remained in bed.

[My cook], from her basement, appears to have obtained a much clearer aural view:

"Didn't you hear them two raiders firing bom-m-ms at each other, sir?"

There spoke your Sinn Feiner: they were both raiders to her. The row lasted for over two hours; and I feel an utter wreck. Lord knows what mischief the brutes have done this time,

Vale et nos ama.

Alexander Teixeira de Mattos

Next day, in a letter dated, *City of Dreadful Nights*, he adds:

Last night no air-raid was possible, because of an appalling thunderstorm, which kept me awake for another three hours. If you have ever heard thunder rolling for fifty seconds without intercession and giving sixty of these roils to the hour, you will know the sort of thunderstorm it was.

This description prompts him to an anecdote:

"Then there's Roche, the resident magistrate. Don't go shooting Roche now . . . unless it's by accident. What does he look like? Well, if ye've ever seen a half-drowned rat, with a grey worsted muffler round its neck, then ye know the kind of man Roche is!"—Speech quoted before the Parnell Commission.

On my return from Cornwall, my flat was not yet ready for me, but the Teixeiras' hospitality allowed me to continue staying with them.

You will be as welcome on Thursday night as peace at Christmas, wrote Teixeira, 9. 9. 17.

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[My cook] is away on a holiday and there is a possibility that she will not be back by then; and in the meantime there is nobody else. You may, therefore, have to submit to a modicum of discomfort: . . . your boots will probably have to accumulate to some extent before they are cleaned on the larger scale. You have so many boots, however, that I venture to hope that this will not incommode you unduly.

This welcome was seasoned later by a story which Teixeira invented, describing his efforts to dislodge me. According to this, he used to fall resonantly from his bedroom to his study at 5.0 each morning and, if this failed to rouse me, he would mount the stairs again and continue to throw himself down until I waked. At 6.0 a cup of tea would be brought me; at 7.0 the morning paper; at 8.0 my letters. When I went to my bath at 8.30, Teixeira used to assert that he flung my clothes into a suit-case, tiptoed downstairs and laid the case on the doorstep. His tactics failed because I only waited until he was locked in the bathroom before creeping down and retrieving the case.

As our leave was over for the year, there

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was no further exchange of letters save when one or other was absent from our department.

I have read the new Maeterlinck play¹—a good theme infamously treated, I find myself writing, 27. 12. 18. I beg you to scrap the third act and with it your regard for M's feelings; then rewrite it with a little passion, a great deal of fear and unlimited un-understanding horror. The invasion of Belgium wasn't a Greek tragedy where the afflicted prosed and philosophised—with a chorus dilating on cattleyas; it was noisy, bloody and, above all, unbelievable. Maeterlinck has brought no nightmare into it. . . .

Letter just received, he replied next day. You are a highly illuminated and illuminating critick. Your remarks upon that play are exactly right (as I now know, having just read my first three Greek plays). . . .

I enclose, he writes 10. 8. 18, 1¾ chapters of the Couperus classical comedy-novel [The Tour], which I amused myself by doing because you insisted so emphatically that the book should

¹ The Burgomaster of Stillemonde.

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be done. But I will go no further till I have your verdict. Don't trouble to do any work on this; the marginal refs. were merely inserted as I went along. Just see if the thing is the sort of thing that's likely to take on; and talk to me about it when you see me. . . .

IX

In 1918 Teixeira's health had so much improved that he was able to dispense with all violent and disabling cures.

This was the period when he was, socially, in greatest request. I introduced him, in the spring, to Mr. and Mrs. Asquith, who shewed him much hospitality and great kindness from this time until his death. His leaves were now usually spent with them at Sutton Courtney; but, since he required to take little or, no sick-leave, the number of letters exchanged in this year is small.

At the armistice, he left the Intelligence Section to become secretary to the department; and, though we worked in the same building for two or three months more, I naturally saw less of him than when we shared the same table. The last communication that passed between us as colleagues, like the first, written three years before, contained an invitation. Its form must be explained by reference to Stevenson's and Osborne's *Wrong*

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Box. Rudyard Kipling has mentioned, in *A Diversity of Creatures*, the sublime brotherhood to whom this book is a second Bible.

"I remembered," [he writes in *The Vortex*], "a certain Joseph Finsbury who delighted the Tregonwell Arms . . . with nine . . . versions of a single income of two hundred pounds, placing the imaginary person in—but I could not recall the list of towns further than 'London, Paris, Bagdad, and Spitzbergen.' This last I must have murmured aloud, for the Agent-General suddenly became human and went on: 'Bus-soran, Heligoland, and the Scilly Islands'—'What?' growled Penfentenyou. 'Nothing,' said the Agent-General, squeezing my hand affectionately. 'Only we have just found out that we are brothers. . . . I've got it. 'Brighton, Cincinnati and Nijni-Novgorod!' God bless R. L. S.¹ . . ." One of the greatest living authorities on *The Wrong Box* was a member of the Reform Club; and, on joining, Teixeira found it necessary to his self-protection to study the most aptly-quoted work in the world.

My invitation was couched in the cryptic terms of the brotherhood:

¹ Frank MacKinnon K. C.

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MATTOS. *Alexander William de Bent Teixeira, if this should meet the eye of, he will hear something to his advantage by lunching with me to-day at the far end of Waterloo Station (Departure Platform) or even at Lincoln's Inn.*

*War Trade Intelligence Department.
30 December, 1918.*

On leaving the department early in 1919, I saw and heard little of Teixeira until he invited me to collaborate in the translation of *The Tour*. Occasional divergencies of opinion about translating Latin words in the English rendering of a Dutch novel had the very desirable result of making Teixeira set out some few of the principles which he followed.

Couperus sends me this postcard, he writes, 29. 4. 18:

"Amice,

"You are of course at liberty to act according to your taste and judgement. I do not however understand the thing: in every novel treating of

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antiquity the classical word sometimes gives a nuance to the untranslatable local colour. And every novelist feels this: See Quo Vadis, in Jeremiah Curtius' translation. However, do as you think proper.

*"Yours,
"L. C."*

He has us on the hip with his Jeremiah Curtius. And I feel more than ever that you were too drastic in your views and I too weak in yielding to them. . . .

We should always guard ourselves against the bees in our bonnets. When I produced Zola's Heirs of Rabourdin, the stage-manager said his play-actors couldn't pronounce Monsieur, Madame and Mademoiselle to his liking: might he try how it would sound with Mr., Mrs., and Miss Rabourdin? He tried!

If your principle were carried to any length, you would have to call a pagoda a tower, a jinrickshaw a buggy, a café a coffee-house, a gendarme a policeman (i.e. a sergent-de-ville), a toga a cloak, a gondola a wherry, an Alpenstock an Alpine stick, a ski a snowshoe: one could go on for ever!

*Yet I am ever yours,
Tex.*

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In the spring and summer of 1919 our letters became more frequent. Though Teixeira spent most of his time in his department, I employed the first months of liberation in staying with friends. The translation of *The Tour* went on apace; and arrangements were made for the English publication of *Old People and the Things That Pass*. If he had given his readers no other book by Couperus or by any other writer, he would still have established two reputations with this.

It's a funny thing, he writes, 21. 5. 19; 4: 57 a. m.; but I find that I can no longer trs. Latin, even with a dictionary. I suppose it's because I can't construe it. Would you mind putting a line-and-a-bit of Ovid into English for me? Here it is:

Materian superabat opus, nam Mulciber illic
Æquora celarat.

. . . My intentions are to go down to I. for 5 or 6 days on the 5th of June and to join my wife at Bexhill on or about the 18th for 3 or 4 weeks.

*"Bexhill-on-Sea
Is the haven for me,"*

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sang Clement Scott in a visitors'-book discovered by Max Beerbohm, who tore him to pieces for it in the Saturday, in an article signed "Max." Scott, pretending not to know who Max was, flew to the Era and wrote his famous absurdity, "Come out of your hole, rat!" Gad, how we used to laugh in those days! . . .

My reply began:

I resent your practice of heading your letters with the unseemly time at which you leave a warm and comfortable bed. And I dated my own: 22 May, 1919. Cocktail-time. What would you think of me if I headed my letters with the equally unseemly time at which I sometimes go to bed? I have been working so late one or two nights last week and this that the times would coincide, and you might bid me good-morning as I bade you good-night. . . .

I went . . . to a musical party. . . . I felt that it was incumbent upon me to see whether you had done anything in the matter of the Belgian quartette.¹ You will be shocked to hear that the quartette is not only still in existence, but

¹ A short time before, Teixeira, who affected a loathing for music, had been invited to hear the same quartette. Abandoning his usual gentleness of speech and spirit, he had accepted on condition of being allowed to massacre the quartette.

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has added a supernumerary to turn over the music of the pianist. . . .

On 7. 6. 19, he wrote from Somersetshire: *You are—it is borne in upon me that you must be—a secret autograph-hunter. Here am I, hoping to do nothing but sleep 26 hours out of the 24, to do nothing ever, to the great ever; and here come you, hoping for a letter, lest you be pained. A scripsomaniac, my poor Stephen, a scripsomaniac you will surely be, if you do not check yourself in time.*

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes! I know that I am Satan rebuking sin; but was Satan ever better employed? Far rather would I see him rebuking sin than prompting letters for idle hands to write.

Well, I know that I am staying in Somersetshire with I., who is at this moment speeding towards the Hotel du Vieux Doelen at the Hague, to nurse a sick friend. Ker pongsay voo der sah? And I am happy as the day is long, petted and coddled by his delightful mother, lolling from the morning unto the evening in the open air and doing not one stroke of work. And utterly at my ease, not even blushing when my brother cuckoo mocks me from the tree-top, as he does sixty times to the minute.

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I return on the 12th; on the 13th I go cuckooing at the Wharf, returning on the 16th; . . . on the 18th I join my wife at Bexhill; how, I ask you, can I come a-cuckooing in Lincoln's Inn?

Nor do see any chance of touching The Tour while I am here. I am really too busy to do aught but play the sedulous cuckoo in Cockayne. So let my visit to you be a pleasure (to both of us) postponed. . . .

To this I replied, 14. 7. 19: I lunched yesterday with one Butterworth, who is opening up a publisher's business. In the course of conversation I mentioned to him your translation of Old People and the Things that Pass. More than that, I took upon myself to lend him my copy of the American edition so that he might have an opportunity of forming his own opinion of it. You may, if you like, call me interfering and presumptuous, but I have not committed you in any way to anything, and yesterday's transaction may be regarded as no more than the loan of a book from one person to another. I, as you know, feel it a reproach that that book is still unpublished in England, and, if Butterworth thinks fit to make you a good offer, no one will be better pleased than me. . . .

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On 26. 7. 19 he wrote from Bexhill: *If it comes on to rain as it threatens daily, I shall be returning The Tour to you quite soon; and in any case it will go back to you before I leave here on the 15th of July: I must reduce the weight of my luggage; I had to run all over the town to find two stalwart ruffians to carry it to the attic where I sleep.*

You need not look at it before we meet unless you wish; but you may like to do Cora's song¹ in your sleep meanwhile; and my additional comments and queries are few.

I am leading here that methodical humdrum life which alone makes time fly. When I return to town you shall see me occasionally at the opera, but not oftener than twice a week. You will have to look for me, however, for I shall be stalking behind pillars, cloaked in black, like Lucien de What's-his-name, hiding from my black beast, Lady. . . .

P. S. Can you tell me if Beecham intends to do any light operas at Drury Lane in addition to that tinkly, overrated Fille de Madame Angot? I am dying to hear the whole Offenbach series before I die.

A letter from Bexhill, dated 2. 7. 19,

¹ Hymn to Aphrodite.

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touches on one general principle of translating:

. . . With all deference, a translator's first duty is not to translate. His first duty is to love God, honour the king and hate the Germans. His next duty is to produce a version corresponding as near as may be with what an English original writer, if he were writing that particular book, would set down. His last duty is to translate every blessed word of the original. . . .

Next day he wrote:

T. B. [Thornton Butterworth] is taking "O. P." [Old People] and coming down here to see me on Saturday.

Ever so many thanks for your generous offices in the matter. . . .

On Peace Day, in a letter dated from Finsbury Circus, Teixeira writes:

Here sit I, putting in four or five hours before a train leaves to take me to Herbert George and Jane Wells at Easton Glebe and reading Quo Vadis. Already, in 99 pages, I have discovered 21 expressions which you would undoubtedly have condemned in The Tour.

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. . . *This is interesting: [the author] says that in Nero's day it was already becoming a stunt among the Romans to call the gods by their Greek Names. Tiberius was not so much earlier—was he?—than Nero that the practice might not have begun even then. If so, we can let Couperus have his way and retain those few names. They are very few, I think. I can remember at the moment only Aphrodite and Zeus and possibly Eros. It may be that Juno is mentioned as Hera, but I doubt it.*

There is a charming garden, with a most beautifully kept lawn. The flowers . . . consist entirely of the only three that I dislike: fuchsias, begonias and red geraniums.

Still . . .

I hope that you are spending the day as peacefully and that this will find you well and happy. . . .

Two east-end Jews within hail of me are talking Yiddish and sharing a Daily Snail between them. There is a cat. There is or am I. And there are those fuchsias.

On 18. 8. 19, I wrote:

The North of Ireland seems beating up for a storm, does not it? I suppose there is no point in my reminding you that a perfect gentleman

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would not fail to present himself at Euston next Friday at 8.10 p. m. to tuck me into my sleeper and see me safely off? My address in Ireland from Aug. 23rd to 31st is (in the care of Sir John Leslie, Baronet) Glaslough, Co. Monaghan. . . .

At 8.10 on Friday, he replied, 20. 8. 19, this perfect gentleman will be eating his melon at Huntercombe Manor House, Henley-on-Thames (in the care of Squire Nevile Foster), but for which he would undoubtedly come to see you oft in the stilly night. I wish you safely through the war-zone, happy and interested in this, your first visit to Ireland and prosperously home again. Now do not write and answer that you have paid eighteen visits to Ireland before: those eighteen visits have always been and always will be to my mind as mythical as the travels of Mungo Park or Mendes Pinto. . . .

Feeling that I must acquaint Teixeira with my safe arrival in Ireland, I wrote, 28. 8. 19:

Glaslough,
Co. Monaghan.

. . . I am here; yes, but how did I get here? I am here; yes, but shall I ever get away? I left London on Friday with my young and very lovely charge, encountered engine-trouble and reached Holyhead an hour late. I sat on the

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boat-deck with her (but without an overcoat), watching the dawn until I was chilled to the marrow and any other man would have been delirious with pneumonia. The breakfast-car train had left, so we took a later one from Dublin. Being faced with the prospect of waiting 2½ hours at Clones, I got out at Drogheda to send a telegram to the Leslies, begging them to meet us there by car. Unhappily, the train went on without me, bearing away my young and very lovely charge, my suit-case, my despatch-box, my umbrella and my hat. I was left with a pair of gloves and my charge's ticket. . . . I bought myself a cap of 4/6 and a clean collar for /4d, and spent the day writing letters, contriving epigrams and lunching off scrambled eggs and Irish whiskey.

I have been taken to the McKenna grave at Donagh and presented—by Shane—to the clan as its head, which I am not. The recognition of Odysseus by his old nurse was eclipsed by the recognition accorded me by an old woman who remembered—unprompted—my coming to Glasgow twelve years ago and thanked God that she had been spared to see me again. It is a very lovely place that the Leslies have taken from us.

But how to leave it? It is Horse Show week, and every sleeper has been booked for three

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weeks. I shall have to cross from Belfast to Liverpool, I think, and try to get my sleeping done on the boat. And that means that I shall not be home till Tuesday. Can't be helped.

On 31. 8. 19 Teixeira wrote to greet me on my return from Ireland:

After your preliminary wanderings, my dear Stephen O'Dysseus, welcome home again! You were always the worst courier in the world; I've not ever known you to bring one of your young and very lovely charges to her destination without encountering cataclysmal adventures on the road. . . . Still, would that I had known that you can buy collars, clean and therefore presumably new collars, at Drogheda for fourpence apiece. Yesterday I paid fifteen shillings for a dozen. . . .

On 21. 12. 19 he writes to offer me good wishes for Christmas:

The one and only thing that the Fortunate Youth appeared to me not to possess will reach you in a little registered packet to-morrow evening. . . . You are to accept it as a token of the happiness which I wish you during this Christmas and the whole of the coming year.

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That was a very jolly party on Wednesday: I enjoyed everything: the gay and kindly company, the admirable foodstuffs, even the music; and, if it be true, as I told you, that Covent Garden has shrunk in size since my young days, I am compelled to confess that your box was a larger than I ever saw before.

At this season of excess, he writes on Christmas Day, I am allowed to indulge my passion for chocolates, but not to buy any for myself; and it was most thoughtful of you to pander to my taste. Thank you ever so much. And thank you also for your good wishes. . . .

I must be off to mass, but not without first begging you to hand your mother and sister my best wishes for a happy New Year. As to you, I shall see or talk to you before then. . . . My young Sinn Feiner has written a novel¹ which to my mind is a most remarkable production and which will have to be read by you at all costs. It is published in Dublin; and it is doubtful whether a single other copy will find its way to this foreign land.

In April Teixeira and his wife went to Hove: and on 27. 4. 20 he writes:

It is blowing what-you-may-call-it here: 'arf a

¹ Eimar O'Duffy's *Wasted Island*.

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mo', 'arf a brick, half a gale. Apart from that, we are well and send our love.

Commenting on a house-party which I had described, he adds:

All we can do, my dear Stephen, is to ask you to remember the old adage:

*Birds of a feather flock together;
and the modern variants:*

*Birds of a beak meet twice a week;
Birds of a voice share a Rolls-Royce;
Birds of a kidney are Alf and Sydney;
Birds of a tail are hail-fellow-hail;
Birds of a crest are twins of the best;
Birds of a gizzard are witch and wizzard;
Birds of a chirrup are treacle and syrup;
The hawk and the owl sit cheek by jowl.*

Yours ever,

Alexander and Lily Tex.

The next letter was from his wife and brought the news that Teixeira's health had taken an unexpected turn for the worse. His life was not in immediate danger, but henceforward he must regard himself as an invalid and must work under the conditions imposed by his doctor.

X

As soon as he was well enough to be moved, Teixeira came up from Hove and, after a few days in Chelsea, went to a nursing-home in Crowborough for the summer.

Nothing is more characteristic of him than that the first message he sent after the beginning of his illness was one of reassurance and optimism:

Sent you a wire this morning, he writes, lest you be seriously distressed. Really much better after nine hours' sleep. . . . I expect I shall be quite well by Saturday, when we return but I shall have to be jolly careful. . . .

Thanks for your letters, he writes, 8. 5. 20, when we were arranging to meet. Nothing you can do for me at present except converse with me in the form of: Tex. Very short questions: Stephen. Very long answers. I'm getting plaguily impatient at the slowness of my recovery: it's very wrong, wicked and impatient of me.

I enclose.

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A. Two lines from your favourite "poet" (save the Mark Tapley)!

B. Some wedding-effusions which remind me that Burne-Jones, when they told him that marriage was a lottery, said:

"Then it ought to be made illegal."

While undergoing his rest-cure, he not infrequently communicated with me by means of annotations to the letters which I wrote him. His comments are given in parenthesis.

I . . . went to see As You Like It at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, I wrote, 15. 5. 20. It is a good production but an uncommonly bad play, like so many of that author's. If any dramatist of the present day served up that kind of musical comedy without the music, but with all the existing purple patches, I wonder what your modern critic would make of it.

(Laurence Irving used to go about saying, "Teixeira says that Shakespeare wrote only one decent play: Timon of Athens! Wha-art d'ye think of that? The mun's mud!") Talking of Shakespeare, if you want to laugh, really to laugh, ce qu'on appelle to laugh, read (you will never see it acted) a stage-play called Titus Andronicus. . . .)

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(Help! A man waved to me on the lawn y'day: an Ebrew Jew . . . had motored down to see his sister here; told me I'd find her very "bright." She's fifty bien sonnés. Told him I'd feel too shy to talk to anybody for weeks. But I'm lending her books. Help!)

Strictly limited in the amount of work which he was allowed to do, Teixeira in these weeks read voraciously; and his letters of this period contain almost the only critical judgements that I was able to extract from him.

On 25. 5. 20. he writes:

Was Pearsall Smith the inventor of the pedigree tracing the descent of the English from the ten lost tribes of Israel?

Isaac
|
Isaacson
|
Saxon

What was the other famous book, besides Erewhon, which George Meredith (whom I am beginning to dislike almost as much as Henry James and Pearl Craigie) caused Smith, Elder

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£ Co. to reject? Was it Treasure Island or something quite different?

Which Samuel Butlers am I to buy now? I have (in the order of which I have enjoyed them):

The Way of all Flesh
Alps and Sanctuaries
The Notebooks
Erewhon Revisited
Erewhon

The machinery part of the last-named bored me; the philosophy also; and I fear I missed much of the irony. But the style! It's unbeaten. It's as good as Defoe. It knocks Stevenson silly because it's so utterly natural. Hats off to that for style.

Should I enjoy The Humour of Homer, though knowing nothing or little about Homer? The Authoress of the Odyssey: would this be wasted on me? What is The Fair Haven about? I don't want to read Butler's religious views—all you Britons think and talk and write much too much about religion—nor his views on evolution: he is too much in sympathy, I gather, with that dishonest fellow, Darwin.

What shall I read of that same Darwin, so that I may do my own chuckling? Please name

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the best two or three, in their order as written.

Where shall I find the quarrels between Huxley and Darwin? That accomplished gyurl, my stepdaughter, had read all about them before she was sixteen but was unable to point me to the book.

At your leisure, my dear Stephen, answer me all these questions. As you see, I'm making progress. I have neither capacity nor inclination (thank God) for work yet, but I can read day without end.

Pearsall Smith's Stories from the Old Testament would amuse you. It's too dear; but it would amuse you, in parts.

In discussing Darwin's books, I suggested that Teixeira should find out whether the members of his church were encouraged to read them.

He replies, 28. 5. 20:

. . . I am very glad that Darwin is on the Index and I hope that this interferes with his royalties. . . .

And on 2. 6. 20:

Pray bear with a postcard. I noticed that you used "detour" on two occasions. . . . I sym-

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pathize. There's no English equivalent save Tony Lumpkin's seriocomic "circumbendibus." But I meant to tell you of my recent discovery that Chesterton uses "detour," sic without an accent or italics. And it's well worth considering. I, for my part, have made up my mind to adopt it in future, by analogy with "depot" and, for that matter, "tour," which is never italicized.

I also intend to adopt your "judgement". . . .

What a lot one can still write for a penny!

Tex.

In acknowledging one of his translations, I wrote:

Two of my worst faults as a reader are that I always finish a book which I have begun and always begin a book which has been presented to me by the author or translator.

Teixeira comments:

(I always thought highly of your brain till now. I regret to tell you that the only other human being who has ever confessed that vice to me is J. T. Grein's mother. . . . Drop that vice. Why, I once "began" to read the Bible! . . .)

With most of your criticisms I agree, my letter continued. Teixeira had been reading the

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manuscript of some short stories; *though there are one or two points on which I remain adamant. If you wish to shorten your life, ask any Coldstreamer whether he belongs to the Coldstreams. It is always either the Coldstream Guards or the Coldstream. . . .*¹

(I suspected you of being right, but I was not ashamed to ask you. You may or may not have observed how much less of a snob I am than most of the people you strike. Cricketing terms, nautical terms, military terms, Latin quantities, those endless excuses for the worst forms of British snobbery, all leave me cold.)

In discussing methods of work, he writes:

(. . . It will interest you to know that Oscar Wilde dropped all his pleasures when he wrote his plays; retired into rooms in St. James' Place, hired ad hoc, to write the first line; and did not leave them till he had written the last. And one of them a least, The Importance, was a perfect work of art, whatever one may think of the others.)

Though he enjoyed his rest-cure, it gave him—he complained—no news to communicate:

¹ Incidentally, my father lived 85 years, during all of which he never spoke of his particular regiment, brigade, division or army corps as anything but the Coldstream Guards; not in jest but in sheer, manly, gentlemanly ignorance.

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You're not interested in my brown dog and I speak to no one else.

On my pointing out that I could not be interested in an animal of which I had hitherto not heard, Teixeira wrote, 4. 6. 20:

. . . It must have been my morbid delicacy that prevented me, knowing your dislike of dogs, from mentioning the brown dog before. As a man gains strength, he loses delicacy: that explains though it does not excuse my late reference to him. He is an Irish terrier, endowed with a vast sense of humour, who runs about on three legs (which is one more than I, who am eighteen times his age, can boast) and plays with me from ten till half-past six (when I go to bed). He saves me from all boredom and I am grateful to him. . . .

Little by little I am beginning to itch for work. . . I can't work yet; but I regard the itching as a good sign. And I no longer find these longish letters so much of a strain. It takes a lot to kill a Portugal.¹

Bring me to the gentle remembrance of your charming host and hostess. I wonder if I shall ever meet either of them at one of your pleasant

¹ Perfectly good seventeenth-century English.

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dinners again. I wonder if I shall ever dine with you again at all. . . .

On 8. 6. 20 he writes:

. . . I send you a letter from . . . a Beaumont master and scholastic in minor orders. Apart from its nice misspelling, its noble, broad-minded casuistry will explain to you why I love the Church, as it explains to me why you hate it. Cependant I suppose that I must set to work and read me a little Darwin.

I am making fair progress, as my recent letters must have proved to you. But I do not yet consider myself near enough to complete recovery to return to town. . . .

In June Teixeira was created a Chevalier of the Order of Leopold II. My letter of congratulation was annotated on this and other subjects:

Referring to a criticism of *Kipps*, I had written:

It is excellent stuff, and I always regard Wells as being one of the . . . greatest . . . comedy-writers. But I always feel that in Kipps and all the earlier books he is only working up to Mr.

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Polly, which is the most exquisite thing that he has done in that line.

(I have read both down here and prefer Kipps. The phrases underlined, quoted in the Times notice (attached) of Wells' Polly-Kippsian "History of the World" reminds me irresistibly of the old lady who, witnessing a performance of "Anthony and Cleopatra," by your Mr. Shakespeare or our Mr. Shaw, observed: "How different from the home life of our dear queen!")

. . . Let me offer you—a trifle belatedly perhaps—my congratulations on your new dignity.

("Thanks." A. Kipps)

Certainly you should tell the [Belgian] Ambassador that it is not only inconvenient but impossible for you to be invested in person and that he must send you the warrant and insignia. . . .

Did I ever tell you the story of Mr. G.'s search for a decoration? The Kaiser refused to give him one on any consideration, and he therefore toured Europe, lending or giving money to one government after another in the hope of being ultimately rewarded with the 4th class of the Speckled Pig. In every court he was promised his decoration, but, when he presented himself for the investiture, the court officials turned from him with just that expression of loathing and nausea which he had formerly observed on the

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face of the Kaiser. It was only when he reached Bulgaria that he found the Czar and his court less squeamish. On payment of a considerable solatium he was invested with the 19th class of the Expiring Porpoise and returned in triumph to his native Stettin. Here, however, his troubles were only beginning, as he was unable to obtain permission to wear the Expiring Porpoise at any public function in Germany. Seeing that he had paid one considerable sum to the Bulgarian Czar and another to the firm of jewellers, who substituted diamonds for the paste of the jewel he felt, naturally enough, that he was receiving little value for his lavish expenditure. Bulgaria, it seemed, was the only country where the Expiring Porpoise could be worn. Accordingly he returned to Sofia and paid a further sum to be invited to the banquet which the burgomaster of Sofia was giving on the Czar's birthday. Here he was at length rewarded for so many months of disappointment and neglect. Before the soup had been served, the Czar had hurried round to his place and was kissing him on both cheeks. "My dear old friend!" said he, "No, you are not to call me 'sir'; henceforth it is 'Fritz' and 'Ferdinand' between us, is it not? How long it is since last I saw you! I have been waiting to express my heart-felt regret for the unpardonable

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carelessness of my Chamberlain. When it was too late and you had left Sofia (I feared for ever), my Chamberlain discovered that you had been invested with the 19th Class of the Expiring Porpoise. You must have thought me mad, for no sane man would offer the 19th class to a person of your distinction. It was the 1st class that I intended. This bauble that I am wearing round my neck to-night. Tell me, my dear Fritz, that it is not too late for me to repair my error." With that word the Czar removed the collar and jewel from his own neck and slipped it over the head of G. taking in exchange G.'s despised collar and jewel of the 19th class. It was only when our friend returned to his hotel that he discovered the new jewel to be of the most unfinished paste, as cheap or cheaper than the paste which he had previously removed at such expense from the jewel of the 19th class.

(This is a splendid story.)

I am afraid, I added, that I have no idea who is the official to whom you apply for leave to wear these things. . . .

(My dear Stephen, you had better here and now adopt as your maxim what I said to Browning soon after he had engaged my services on behalf of H. M. G.: "I yield to no man living in my ignorance on every subject under the sun."

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You outdo and outvie me. You never know anything. In other words, you know nothing. But I'll wager that these are worn without permission. What's the penalty? The Morning Post to-day names a couple of dozen to whom it's been granted.)

Evidently feeling that I was living too much alone, Teixeira enclosed a copy of *The Times'* list of forthcoming dances:

(Don't wait for invitations, he urged in a post-script. Ring the top bell and walk inside.)

The next letter needs to have Teixeira's use of the word palimpsest explained. His good-nature in reading his friends' manuscripts was inexhaustible. I never intended him to do more than give me a general opinion; but his critical vision was microscopic, and he filled the margins with questions and comments. In returning me one manuscript, he wrote:

I have made some 800 notes, of which 600 are purely frivolous. Six are worth serious attention.

While this textual scrutiny was quite inval-

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uable, Teixeira seldom gave that general opinion of which I always felt in most need at the moment when I had lately finished a book and was unable to regard it with detachment. Accordingly, the manuscript, on leaving him, was usually sent to another friend, who commented not only on the text but also on the marginalia. As her occasional controversies with Teixeira (expressed in such minutes as:

"Pull yourself together, Mr. T!"

"You men! One's as bad as the other, you know."

"Never mind what Mr. T. says, Stephen: I understand."

"I *wish* my brain worked as quickly as that.")

and with me invited rejoinders, the first version of a manuscript sometimes took on the appearance of a contentious departmental file. It was in this form that Teixeira called it a palimpsest.

On 22. 6. 20 he writes:

*Thanks for your letter and the palimpsest. . . .
I've studied it amid distressing circumstances, in*

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a long-chair, on a lawn, beneath the sun, surrounded by breezes and patients, who being forbidden to speak to me, dare not help me to collect the scattered pages. . . .

Lady D. is another of England's darlings. In the first place, she nearly always agrees with me and there she's right: I have told you time after time that, if only everybody would agree with me, the world would be an infinitely sweeter place. In the second place, she dislikes Browning almost as much as I do. No one can dislike him quite so much; but she certainly disapproves of your particular taste in extracts from the burlesque mountebank's rhymed works.

I can understand that she sometimes unsettles you by condemning you for the quite logical behaviour of the male characters in your trilogy: you might meet this by presenting her with a copy of Thus spake Zarathustra in addition to those pencils which will mark which you already had in mind for her. On the other hand, I think that you may safely take her word for it when she says:

*"Oh, Stephen, women aren't like this!"
Send me more! Send me more!*

In a letter of 22. 6. 20, he wrote:

To-morrow I make my way up to Oxford for

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the House Gaudy but before leaving I may find a moment to report my movements.

Teixeira comments:

(I have heard of the House Beautiful but never of the House Gaudy. Now don't be a British snob but answer like a little Irish gentleman, as I should answer if you asked me what "acht-en-tachtig Achtergracht" mean in Dutch. Of course, working it out in the light of my own intelligence, I feel that, if "House" is an Oxford sobriquet for Christ Church and "gaudy" Oxford slang for a merrymaking of sorts, you ought to have suppressed that capital G and written "the House gaudy," in distinction from the Balliol gaudy, the Magdalen gaudy, etc.

You are not a Hottentot (Loud cheers), but you are as fond of capital letters as a Hottentot is of glass beads.

I'm feeling rather full of beans to-day . . . (as you perceive.) . . .

The improvement was visibly maintained in his letter of 25.6.20:

Thanks for your two letters of the 23rd and 24th instant postum. Don't start; instant postum is the ridiculous name of the toothsome bev-

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erage which my specialist ordered me to take instead of tea or coffee. . . .

I jump at the chance of playing the school-master in the matter of those capital letters. It is too utterly jolly finding you in a compliant mood. . . .

My rule and yours might well be to start with a definite prejudice against capital letters in the middle of a sentence, combined with a resolve never to use them if it can be avoided. Having taken up this firm standpoint, we can afford and we can begin to make concessions. For instance, my heart leapt with joy, nearly twenty years ago, when the founders of the Burlington Review decided to abolish all capitals to adjectives, to print "french, german, egyptian, persian," etc. You have no idea how well this affected the page. But what is all right in a majestic review (or was it magazine, by the way?) like the Burlington may look ultraprecious in a novel. Therefore I concede French, German, etc. Only remember that it is a concession, a concession to Anglo-American vulgarity. A Frenchman writes (and that not invariably: I mean, not every Frenchman). "Un Français les Anglais," but (invariably) "L'elan français, le rosbif anglais" The Germans and Danes begin all nouns with a capital (as the English did, in some centuries), but

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no adjectives whatever. The Italians, Norwegians and Swedes have no capitals to their adjectives; the Dutch are gradually discarding them; they are discarded entirely in scientists' Latin: the Narbonne Lycosa (a certain spider of the Tarantula genus) in Latin becomes Lycosa narbonniensis. . . .

Your question about "high mass" is, involuntarily, not quite fair. Mass quite conceivably comes within the category of such words as State and a few others, which are spelt with a capital in one sense and not in another.¹ I write "going to mass" (no French catholic would write "allant à la Messe!") and I see no reason why catholics should write Mass except in a technical work. They would write "the Host" because of the real presence; but I see no more reason for the Mass than for Matins or Compline. Obviously, it is different in a technical work in translating Fabre, I speak of a Wasp, a Spider, a Beetle; in translating Couperus, I do not. . . .

"The Colonel, the Major, the Vicar," in a novel; don't they set your teeth on edge? As well write about the Postmistress of the village.

When in doubt, as I wrote to you on the subject of the hyphenated nouns, take little Murray¹

¹ *Even the French write, invariably, un coup d'Etat, le conseil d'Etat, but l'état des coups, l'état du conseil.*

¹ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary.*

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for your guide. He has the sense to begin the vast, the immense majority of his words with a lower-case letter. And there are doubtful words: Titanic, Cyclopean. I never know these without turning 'em up for myself.

To sum up:

(a) take a firm stand against capitals generally;

(b) be prepared to make moderate (i. e. grudging,) concessions;

(c) have little Murray at your elbow.

After so long a letter, Teixeira contented himself with a few annotations to one next day.

On my telling him that I had congratulated a common friend of his son's "blue", he interposed:

(I would write to A. P. if I knew what a "blue" was; but I really have not the remotest idea. Word of honour, I'm not conniegilchristing. I presume it has to do with cricket; and it's a mere guess.)

I have studied your exposition of capitals, I continued, with great interest and, I hope, profit, though there is a fundamental difficulty which I

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hasten to put before you. . . . So long as proper names intrude their capitals into mid-sentence you cannot arrive at flat uniformity, and a few capitals more or less do not offend me. . . .

I did not intend to be unfair about High Mass and first thought of suggesting for your consideration either Holy Communion or that hideous, hypocritical, pusillanimous compromise beloved of Anglicans, the "eucharist," then substituted the name of a ceremonial in your own church. You, I see, write of the Real Presence without capitals.

(Gross knavery and insincerity on my part; rank scoundrelism. I'd have put caps, on any other occasion.)

I should give capitals to this and to such words as Incarnation, Crucifixion and Ascension, when used in a religious connection. Also to the word Hegira and any similar words culled from any other religion. As I told you before, I am without a rule and would let almost any word have its capital, if I could please it thereby. Words used in a special sense also have their capitals from me, as for example Hall, when that means a college dinner served in hall. No, I am afraid that a capital for colonel, major and vicar leaves my teeth unmoved, and I could write postmis-

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tress with a capital light-heartedly. On the other hand I should not use a capital for dustman, as this is not a title or office.

I am, as you see, quite illogical and inconsistent; and, if I try to follow your rules, it will be only in the hope of pleasing you. I cannot rouse myself to any enthusiasm for or against a liberal use of capitals and I do not think that it is a matter of great importance. On considerations of comeliness, I think the French printed page, with its vile type and vile, fluffy paper, is one of the ugliest things (Nonsense, nonsense, you unæsthetic Celt! The unsought, natural beauty and perfection of the page make up for all the inferiority of the material. Never say that again! Your friend Seymour Leslie would scratch and claw you for it.) ever allowed to issue from a printing press, but that may be only insular prejudice. . . .

Forgive a boring letter, I beg, but I am in a thoroughly boring mood. (Grawnted.) . . .

A postscript to this controversy came on a postcard dated 28. 6. 20:

. . . Darwin spells "the king" with a small "k."

He is rather good in spelling, bad in punctuation, execrable in statement, logic, deduction. In

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The Descent of Man *he says*:

"Music arouses in us various emotions, but not the more terrible ones of horror, fear, rage, etc."

He had never heard of me, though I was 17 when he died.

Tex.

*Crowborough, 30 June (alas,
how time flies!) 1920.*

For your two letters of 28, 29 June, many thanks. I really can't write and congratulate H. on that! How awful!

And to think that, if Lionel [the recipient of the "blue"] had been "vowed" to the B. V. M. in his infancy, he'd have worn nothing but blue and white, anyhow, till he came of age! . . .

Objecting to my having enclosed the phrase "honest broker" in inverted commas, he continues:

Lady Y., you may remember, said:

"Good beobles, we come here for your goots."

"Ay," they replied, "and for our chattels too!"

I don't want your chattels; but I am convinced that I came to England for your goots and to save you from degenerating into a lady novelist.

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The worst of it is that Lady D. agreed with you. . . . Seriously, however: suppose Winston were to use a perfectly commonplace metaphor, to say, e. g., that he had ordered the Gallipoli expedition off his own bat. Would that for all time raise those four words from the commonplace to the exceptional? Could you never employ that phrase except in "quotes"? . . .

Be sensible. Do not fight against your rescuer. Let me, when I receive the Royal Humane Society's medal, feel that my gallant efforts were not in vain, that I succeeded in saving your life and soul! . . .

P. S. An invitation to the . . . Oppenheim wedding has just arrived. Like the man who answered the big-game-hunter's advertisement, I'm not going.¹

¹The reference here is to a story illustrative of the tricks which a man's memory sometimes plays him:

Reading in the *Morning Post*, that Mr. John Brown, of 500 Clarges Street, is shortly leaving for Uganda on a big-game-shooting expedition and would like a gentleman to come with him, sharing expenses, thought no more of the advertisement and went about his day's work. That night he dined intemperately. On being ejected from his club, he was bound for home when he recalled the forgotten advertisement and decided that something must be done about it.

Driving to 500 Clarges Street, he demanded to see Mr. John Brown.

"Are you Mr. John Brown?" he enquired of a sleepy and illhumoured figure in pyjamas.

"I am, sir," answered John Brown.

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"You're the Mr. John Brown going shooting Uganda?"

"Yes."

"You want shome one come with you?"

"Yes." . . .

"Share 'spenshes?"

"Yes."

"You put that 'vertissment in *Morning Posht*?"

"Yes."

"I thought sho. Shorry knock you up. Felt I musht tell you. . . . that I'm not coming." . . .

Trusting that this will find you alive, he writes 7. 7. 20, I write to thank you for your letter and to return the book. [The Diary of a Nobody]. It amused me, though I am not prepared to go as far as Rosebinger, Birringer or Bellinger. I could certainly furnish a bedroom without it; in fact, I hope to die before I read it again; I don't rank it with Don Quixote; and I have never seen the statue of St. John the Baptist, so "can't say." I think that Mr. Hardfur Huttle, towards the end, does much to cheer the reader.

I have bought pahnds and pahnds' worth of books; I am rou-inned; and yet I never have aught to read. Can you lend me Huxley's Collected Essays? Can you lend me anything in which somebody "goes for" somebody else? I yearn to read savage attacks; you know what I mean: not attaxi-cabri-au lait, but attacks free from all milk of human kindness.

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Here is a typical quotation from your favourite "poet", whom, by the way, Benjamin Beaconsfield disliked as much as I do:

"Out of the wreck I rise, past Zeus to the P(sic)otency o'er him."

Nice and typical, isn't it? But you mustn't use it, as the first six words form the title of a novel by Beatrice Harraden which I have been driven to read down here by the dearth of books.

My last two purchases have just arrived; series i and ii of the New Decameron. Shall I enjoy them? . . .

You will want something to read in the train, he writes on 10. 7. 20. Read this Muddiman's (Men of the Nineties. But please return it to me; it will serve to keep the child quiet when she next comes down. And it served to make me feel very young again (seven years younger than you are now) to read of all those remarkable men with whom I foregathered in the nineties.

They would probably have accepted Squire and Siegfried Sassoon.¹ None of the other poets; none of the prose-writers, painters, "blasters" or blighters. . . .

In acknowledging the book, I objected to what I considered the excessive importance

¹ They would have gone quite mad over the Russian Ballet.

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that is still attached to the men of the nineties and to their work:

I doubt, I wrote, 12.7.20, whether the years 1890 to 1900 have produced more permanent literature of the first order than any other decade of the 19th century—or the twentieth. Paris was discovered anew in those days and seemed a tremendous discovery, though its influence was meretricious, and the imitations from the French were usually of the worst French models. The discovery of art for art's sake was, I always feel, the most meaningless and pretentious of all other shams. Even Wilde never made clear what he meant by the phrase, though he and his school interpreted it practically by a wholly decadent over-elaboration of decoration. The interest of the period lies in the astounding success achieved by this noisy and self-sufficient coterie in imposing itself on the easily startled, and easily shocked and still more easily impressed middle and upper classes of London society. But that is a thing that so many people can do and a thing that is so seldom worth doing.

In a later letter, I added, 15.6.20:

I believe that the great bubble of the nineties has been pricked for the present generation. All

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the work of Max, most of Beardsley and a little of Wilde have a permanent place; and, if some one would do for the poets and essayists of the nineties what Eddie Marsh has done for the Georgian poets, we might have one volume of moderate size containing the poetry of interest and good craftsmanship though of little power or originality. . . .

Whether [the artistic movement of the nineties] effected any great liberation of spirit or manner from the fetters of mid-Victorian literature I cannot say, though I am inclined to doubt it. That liberation was being achieved by individual writers such as Meredith and Kipling, who never had anything to do with the domino-room of the Cheshire Cheese. Never, I am sure, was any artistic group so void of humour as the men of the nineties.

Having damned them, their period and work so far, I may surprise you by conceding that they do still arouse great interest. . . . I have been thinking that it is almost your duty to put on permanent record your own knowledge and opinions about this school. Max Beerbohm is unlikely to do it, and you must now be one of the very few men living who were on terms of intimacy with the leaders of the movement. . . . Men under thirty have never heard of John Gray,

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Grackanthorpe or your over advertised American friend Peters. Your annotations to Muddiman's book go some very little distance towards filling this gap, but I think you should undertake something more substantial. For heaven's sake do not call it The History of the Nineties, but is there any reason why you should not—from your memory and without consulting a single work of reference—compile a little book of Notes on the 'Nineties? Make it an informal dictionary of biography, put down all the names of the men associated with that movement at leisure, record about each everything that has not yet appeared in print and correct the occasionally incorrect accounts of other writers. Such a book would be a valuable addition to literary history, it would be amusing and not difficult for you to write, it could be turned to the profit of your reputation and pocket. . . .

For this criticism Teixeira took me to task in his letter of 14. 7. 20.

And now, Stephen, tremble. How often have I not called you "the wise youth!" How constantly have I not believed you to be filled with knowledge, either acquired or instinctive and intuitive, of most things! And now your letter . . . has disappointed me almost to tears.

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Your only excuse would be that you took Oscar Wilde and Bernard Shaw to be and practically alone to be the men of the nineties. That is not so. And, if you agree with me that Oscar was a man of the eighties and that Shaw is a man of the twentieth century, you have no excuse whatever and 98% of the first paragraph in your letter is dead wrong.

I presume that you keep copies of your letters to me: you should; they will be useful for your Memoirs of a Celibate (John Murray: 1950; 105/-net). Anyhow, here goes:

There was no question of either a literary revival or revolution in the nineties and there was no sham, colossal or minute.

The men engaged were not pretentious, not conceited, not humbugs. They were a group of men, mostly under 30, who just wrote and drew and painted as well as they could, in all sincerity and with no view of financial gain. Dowson, Johnson, Horner, Image, etc., etc., etc., were the humblest, most modest lot of literary men I ever met.

Their output was not immense: it was infinitesimal, just because they were so careful to produce only work that was "just so." Think, Stephen. What did Henry Harland, one of the few to live to over 40, put out? The Cardinal's Snuff Box, My Friend Prospers, Mademoiselle

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Miss and Other Stories: that is all! Ernest Dowson: two slim volumes of verse, half-a-dozen short stories, a collaborator's share in two novels. John Gray: one slim volume of verse. Lionel Johnson: God knows how little. And so on. Arthur Symms has worked on steadily, but, though he is getting on for sixty, you cannot say that his output is immense or contains anything that was not worth doing.

Immensely advertised! Where? And by whom?

Beardsley's output was immense, for his years. Ought not the world to be grateful for it? He told me once that he had an itch for work; and it looked afterwards as if he knew that he was doomed to die at 24 or 26 and wanted to throw off all he could before. When he worked no one knew: no one ever saw him at work and he was always about and always accessible.

He was not conceited. . . . Ricketts and Shannon were a little conceited: they had a way of "coming the Pope" over the rest, as Will Rothenstein once put it to me. (Will always took "a proper pride" in his excellent work, but no more). But, Lord, hadn't they the right to be? Was ever a book more beautifully designed than Silverpoints (cover, page, type, typesetting by Ricketts)? Place Ricketts' cover of the Pageant

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beside any other book in your library and tell me how it strikes you. Look at anything that Charles Shannon condescends to exhibit in the Academy and see how the quality of it slays everything around it exactly as a picture by Whistler or Rossetti would do.

To revert to immensity of output (I have to keep levanting and tacking about), I call immense the output of Belloc (the modern Sterne), Chesterton (the modern Swift), E. V. Lucas (the modern Addison); they themselves would be flattered at the comparisons. These chaps, though they can and sometimes do write as well as the men of the nineties, spoil their average by writing immensely; and they write immensely because they want a good deal of money. Now the men of the nineties hadn't clubs, homes, wives or children; lunched for a shilling; dined for eighteen pence; and didn't want a lot of money. They cared neither for money nor fame; they cared for their own esteem and that of what you call their coterie and I their set.

And that (to answer a question which you once asked me) is art for art's sake; and I maintain that it is not right to call this meaningless or pretentious or a sham.

This coterie, or set, was not noisy: I never met a quieter; it was self-sufficient only in the

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best sense; and it in no way imposed or impressed itself on the middle and upper classes of London society. How could they? I doubt if any number of the Savoy ever sold 1,000 copies; certainly no number ever sold 2,000. And they . . . were never in society, were never in the outskirts of society and never wanted to be in either.

But there! I daresay you were thinking of Oscar all the time. . . .

Enter on the lawn a nurse bearing my dinner-tray. After dinner I retire to bed. . . .

One day, Teixeira added, 17. 7. 20, I'll return to those men of the nineties (I will never write a book about them: really I was too much outside them). . . .

I trust that some Leonard Merricks are on the way: I'm nigh starved for books again. Don't send me Zola or Balzac in English: I couldn't stomach the translations. And I expect you're right about Balzac's French style. Those giants were awful chaps: Balzac, Rubens, the pylon-designing Baines, brrrr! . . .

On 22. 7. 20 he writes:

I beseech you, if you haven't it, buy yourself a copy of The Home Life of Herbert Spencer. By "Two." It is the book praised by "Rozbury" in his letter to Arrowsmith prefacing The Diary

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of a Nobody. I bought it and began to shake with laughter at Rosebery's being such an ass. But, after a few pages, I began to see what he meant; and then, time after time, I nearly rolled off my long-chair with laughing not at Rosebery but with him. I'd lend it you, but it'll only cost you 3/6; and I want you to have it as a companion volume to *The Diary*.

However, if you will not buy it, I will lend it to you. You've "got" to read it, or I will never write you another letter.

And on 23. 7. 20:

Some 32 years ago, "Pearl Hobbes" wrote to me that I ought to translate Balzac; and I am sorry it is too late for me to do Goriot. I am rereading it all the same with much enjoyment, though I think that these gala editions should be at least as well translated as my Lutetian set of six Zola novels.

Huxley, in his little autobiography, writes:

"As Rastignac, in the *Père Goriot*, says to Paris, I said to London:

"*'A nous deux!'*"

I remembered that this came at the end of the book, turned to it and found:

"Rastignac . . . saw beneath him Paris, . . . The glance he darted on this buzzing hive seemed

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in advance to drink its honey, while he said proudly:

"'Now for our turn—hers and mine.'"

An epigrammatic tag sadly boshed, I think.

I find that "leave them nothing but their eyes to weep with" occurs in this book; so we must absolve poor old Bismark at any rate from inventing this bloodthirsty phrase.

And I find the Ukraine mentioned! The Ukraine! The dear old Ukraine! A sweet land of which I—and you? be honest! had never heard before the days of the W. T. I. D.

I have sent for a complete set of Heine from Heinemann; it just occurred to me that I have read little of this great man's. And I am told that the translation is good. . . .

Do E. and J., he asks, 26. 7. 20, ever perpetrate those plays upon words of which Heine was so fond? They are not exactly puns; I am not sure that quodlibets isn't the word for them. E. G. : Herr von Schnabelowpski smites the heart of a Dutch hotel-proprietress. Over the real china cups she gazes at him porcela (i) nguidly.

That is not a very good example. This one is better: Heine calls on Rothschild at Frankfurt. Rothschild receives him quite famillion-airly.

Good-bye. It threatens rain; and I propose

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to spend the day in bed, with the proofs of The Inevitable. . . .

A criticism of Plarr's *Life of Dowson* leads Teixeira, 27. 7. 20, to annotate the letter that contained it:

. . . I was suggesting, I wrote, that the effect . . . on the minds of a generation which knew not Dowson would be to make it feel that it did not want to know him. . . .

(Your cecession from catholicism, he replies, has done you McKennas a lot of harm. You flout tradition and go in for rational inference and deduction in its place. Horrible, horrible! The apostles are not all dead; many of them are your living contemporaries; you could, if you like, receive at first hand their memories of their dead fellows; and you prefer to make up your own mistaken impressions in the light of your own mistaken intellect. Well, well!

And, if you write just that sort of life of me, I'll wriggle with pleasure in my coffin.)

This evening Henry Arthur Jones is giving a dinner . . . to James M. Beck. . . . I have been bidden to attend. . . .

(Beck is the finest orator I ever heard; and I've heard Gladstone inter alios.

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Those Heine quodlibets about which I wrote y'day are, I believe, called "split puns," though I doubt the happiness of the term. I made one in my sleep this morning: rowdies on the Brighton road indulging in a charabanquet. . . .)

I can never have news, as you may imagine, writes Teixeira, 29. 7. 20; my letters must be always replies to yours. . . .

I like your Cave-Brown-Cave story if it was true; it probably was, as a family of that name exists.¹

I never heard John Redmond, I am sorry to say. He was, so to speak, after my time. I heard Parnell and, if I were only a mimic, could give you his curiously contemptuous, high-bred, high-pitched voice to-day. I heard Randolph; and at the time, in the eighties, both he and Arthur Balfour used to lisp. Does A. B. lisp now? Answer this: it interests me; and it has a sort of bearing on that passing-fashion competition which you were starting. So essential to birth and breeding was the lisp in those days that even the English-bred Comte de Paris lisped . . . in French! I was at his silver wed-

¹ The story in question was of a member of the Cave-Brown-Cave family, who, after conversing with a stranger in a railway-carriage, was asked his name.

"Cave-Brown-Cave," he replied. "And may I ask yours?"

"Home-Sweet-Home," answered his infuriated interlocutor.

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ding and well remember his reception of me.

"Vouth êtes le bienvenu ithi!"

Incidentally I remember that good King Edward ("then Prince of Wales," as the memoir-writers say) glared at me furiously on that occasion, because I was wearing trousers of the identical pattern as his: an Urquhart check with a pink line. . . .

In the course of a dinner-party given at this time, the conversation turned on those men and women who had won everlasting renown with the least effort or justification. The United States Ambassador (Mr. Davis) proposed Eutychus, of whom little is known but that he fell asleep during a sermon and tumbled from a window: I suggested the uncaring Gallio, who did less and is better known. Some one else put forward Melchisedec. Agreeing that every name in the Bible has a certain immortality, we turned to secular history. At the subsequent instigation of Mr. Davis, Lord Curzon of Kedleston propounded "the apple-bearing son of William Tell." I invited Teixeira to give his opinion.

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I can't compete with Curzon, he replied on 6. 8. 20, though I've tried. After all, he was one of the Souls! I did think of Alfred and the cakes; but that monarch owes only $\frac{5}{6}$ of his immortality to those cakes and young Tell owed all his to the apple. But stay! Many hold Tell and his offspring to be mythical persons. If so, what about the good wife who scolded Alfred? I should like you to find some one who will say that I have beaten Curzon. . . .

I shall be in town from 8 September to a few days later. If you want to see me, you must arrange your engagements accordingly. I am the colour which we can never get our brown shoes to assume till just before the moment when they drop off our feet. But I am as weak as ten thousand rats. . . .

On 7. 8. 20 he writes:

You will remember that . . . I declined to join your Passing Fashion Research Society, or whatever you decided to call it. But I have no objection to being an honorary corresponding member. And I will set you a subject.

To establish the year in which it first became the vogue for smart British males to don a deliberately dowdy attire.

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The dowdiness all burst upon my astonished eyes at once: the up-and-down collar worn with a top hat and a morning coat; permanently turned trousers worn with Oxford shoes, so as to display an inch or so of sock; tie usually to match the socks and often "self-coloured" and patternless. There are three items of sheer deliberate dowdiness for you. Another dowdy item was even a little earlier, I believe: the one-buttoned glove, showing a bit of bare wrist between it and the shirt-cuff. But the soft-fronted dress-shirt, also a piece of dowdy dandyism, came in much at the same time as the three specimens cited above.

I should guess the year to be either 1907 or 1908, but I am not quite sure. You, with your wonderful memory, may be able to place it, for 1907-8 marks the period when you burst upon the London firmament.

I—who can remember witnessing a departure for Cremorne—I, I need hardly tell you, remember much older and almost as strange things. I remember peg-top trousers, skin-tight trousers, bell-shaped trousers, though I can't fix the epoch of any of these phenomena; and I can remember when we deliberately wore our trousers so long that we trod upon them with our heels and frayed them; and that was in 1880-1.

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But all I ask that you should fix is the date of the deliberately dowdy well-dressed man. . . .

I think, he writes, 9. 8. 20, that the time has come for you to write . . . a big political novel, a big, serious, flippant, earnest, sarcastic, political novel. . . . Your book should be quite Disraelian in scope; it should be a roman a clef to this extent, that it would contain half—or quarter-portraits; and you ought to concentrate on it very thoroughly. I am convinced that the world is waiting for it.

Do you observe the comparative sweetness of my mood. It is doomed entirely to this glorious weather. For the rest, I hope and believe that you never resent those whacks with which, when the sky is overcast, I am apt to belabour my correspondents like an elderly Mr. Punch on his hustings.

My good, kind Brighton doctor—good because he is clever, kind because he charges me no fee—was over here from Brighton y'day to see me. He tells me that this peculiar susceptibility of mine to atmospheric influence is a symptom of convalescence rather than ill-health. He is much pleased with the improvement in my condition; and he approves of my winter plans, though he would rather have dispatched me to San Remo or even Egypt had either been feasible.

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Read Max on Swinburne in the Fortnightly Review when you get the chance and contrast it with George Moore's account of his visit to Swinburne, in which he can only tell us that he found the poet naked in bed. I forget where it occurs. . . .

In answering this letter I pointed out that Disraeli avoided the great political issues of the days in which he was writing and that any author, such as H. G. Wells in *The New Machiavelli*, Granville Barker in *Waste* and H. M. Harwood in the *Grain of Mustard Seed*, who attempts a political theme is almost bound to impale himself on one or other horn of a dilemma; if his novel or play revolve round a living controversy such as the right to strike in war-time or the justice of ordering reprisals in Ireland, the theatre may become the scene of a nightly riot and the critics will consider their own political preferences more earnestly than the literary merits of the book; if the action of play or novel be based on a dead or unborn controversy, it will fail to arouse the faintest interest. I was sure that the other admirers of the three works

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which I quoted were unmoved by the endowment of motherhood, by educational reform and by housing schemes.

In reply, Teixeira wrote, 11. 8. 20:

. . . Don't slay the suggestions of the big political novel off-hand or outright. I mean a bigger thing than you do; a thing that not Wells nor Barker nor Harwood . . . could write, whereas you, I think, could; a thing as big as Coningsby; a thing called The Secretary of State or The First Lord of the Treasury, or some such frank affair as that.

You have kept up a "very average" logical position in life. You know a number of statesmen, but you know only those whom you like and you like only those whom you esteem. Your portraits of those whom you esteem could not offend them; your sketch even of a genial rogue . . . could not offend him; and you don't or ought not to care if your daguerreotypes of S., M. and B. offended them or not. . . .

Incidentally you might do no little good, to Ireland, which should have been your native land, to England, which by your own choice remains your home, and to the world in general, to which I hope that you bear no ill-will. . . .

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In his next letter, 14. 8. 20, he returns to the same subject:

Your letter . . . pretty well convinces me, at any rate about the Coningsby novel. Dizzy never wrote about the period in which he was just then living. All his novels are antedated a good many years. This by way of defending him against any idea that he ever offended by betraying private or official secrets in his novels. . . .

One of Teixeira's last letters (19. 8. 20) from Crowborough contained a translation of the terms (already quoted) in which Couperus congratulated him on his version of *The Tour*:

Couperus writes:

"Your last envoi has given me a most delightful day. What a magnificent translation. The Tour is; what a most charming little book it has become! I am in raptures over it and read and reread it all day and have had tears in my eyes and have laughed over it. You may think it silly of me to say all this; but it has become an exquisitely beautiful work in its English form. My warmest congratulations! . . .

"Thank McKenna for his assistance: the hymn has become very fine. For that matter the

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whole book is a gem, if I may say so myself."

So I've had one appreciative reader at any rate! . . .

On 27. 8. 20 he adds:

Tell Norman [Major Holden, then liberal candidate for the Isle of Wight] that, should there be an election in "the island" before I leave Ventnor, he'll find me both able and ready to impersonate the oldest inhabitant and gallop to the polling-station, in my bath-chair, and vote for him. . . .

And, finally, in praise of toleration:

31 August 1920 (being the birthday of Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands).

It won't do to insist on this racial aspect of things. I was never of those who called L. G. a damned little Welsh solicitor. He would have been just the same had he been Scotch or English or Irish. After all, our friend R. is little and Welsh and was a solicitor and will as likely as not be damned if he doesn't join his wife's church. And there is the converse case, when you hear men describing an outrage committed by Englishmen as "unenglish." How can the things be unenglish which the English do?

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Like yourself, the late W. H. Smith was shocked when Parnell stood up and told the House of Commons . . . that he had lied to them in the interests of his country. I like to think of you as occupying a subtler and more philosophical standpoint than the late W. H. Smith. . . .

I continue to feel better; and the arrival of two very pretty women patients has loosed my tongue and given me an outlet for many a childish and innocent jest. I excuse these jests by saying that they're due to Minerva.

"Who's Minerva?"

"Mi-nervous breakdown. By the way, I hope you like your Alf?"

"Our Alf? What do you mean?"

"Your al-f-resco meals."

Just like that! . . .

XI

For the next few days Teixeira was absorbed in his preparations for leaving Crowborough. On arriving in London, he came to stay with me until he and his wife went to the Isle of Wight for the autumn and winter.

In acknowledging, on 1. 9. 20 his instructions about the diet on which he now lived, I wrote:

Many thanks for your letter written on the anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands. Do not forget to date any letters you may write on Friday the anniversary of Naseby, the crowning mercy of Worcester and the death of O. Cromwell.

Teixeira interpolated here:

(And the birthday of my late aunt Judith Teixeira.)

On 2. 9. 20 he writes:

Dodd [Dodd, Mead and Co. Inc.] is going to reissue [Couperus'] Majesty in America and

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would like you to write a preface to it. . . . Will you do this? I should very much like you to. It involves re-reading the book, I fear; but after that you will not have much to do except to draw an analogy between the hero and the poor Czar, on whose character the recent articles in the Times have thrown an interesting light.

I reminded Teixeira that I had never read *Majesty*, as I had never been able to secure a copy.

You're perfectly right, he replied on 5. 9. 20. I'll bring the only copy in the world, that I know of, in my suit-case.

You will be able to point to some remarkable prophecies on C's part (he foretold the Hague Conference years before it happened) and, for the rest, to let yourself go as you please on high continental dynastic politics. I doubt if any writer ever entered into the soul of princes as this astonishing youth of 25 or so did. . . .

I propose to revise *Majesty* so thoroughly that I shall be entitled to eliminate Ernest Dowson's name from the title-page, even as I eliminated John Gray's from that of *Ecstasy*. There was no true collaboration in either case; and they did little more for me than you did in *Old People*:

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not so much as you did in The Tour. Neither had the original before him.

I look forward greatly to my stay with you . . . Eimar O'Duffy [the author of The Wasted Island] has been married by another novelist and has gone to live with her in a cottage in Wexford. She spells her name Cathleen; and he has sent me his early poems, in which he spelt his name Eimhar. He tells me that this spelling was abandoned because it didn't look well; this I accept. He adds that it is pronounced Avar: this I do not believe. . . .

On leaving me, Teixeira wrote 24. 9. 20 to tell me that he had reached Ventnor without mishap:

This is not to acknowledge the receipt of any letter from you that may or may not be awaiting me at the County & Castle Club, an edifice into which I have not yet made my comital and castellated entry. Rather is it to announce my safe arrival, after four hours of wearying travel, and my complete revival, after ten hours of refreshing sleep, and to repeat my thanks for your utterly exceptional and debonnair hospitality.

The first impression of Ventnor is favourable. . . .

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This pococurantist attitude, if I may employ a phrase beloved by Teixeira, was not supported by his wife in the postscript which she added:

Poor fellow, he was so tired travelling and so good over it. This place one could wear rags in, it's so antiquated; and we shall return confirmed frumps and bores. There is some miniature beauty in a low hill and a tinkly pier that would be blown away in a quarter of a gale. . . .

I have seen the sun and feel reasonably well and happy, Teixeira proclaims in a second letter on the same day. . . .

From the end of September to the end of December, when I left England, our letters—though we corresponded almost daily were much taken up with business matters. I therefore only reproduce such extracts as throw light on Teixeira's literary opinions and on his life at Ventnor.

My dear Stephen, loyal and true, he writes on 3. 10. 20; *A thousand thanks for Lady Lilith, with its charming dedication, and for your letter. . . . I cannot well lend you the Repington volumes. I have them from the Times Book*

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Club, which is all that my poor wife has to supply her with books. But seriously I advise you to buy them. They are as admirable as they are beastly. They form a perfect record of the war as you and I saw it; you will refer to them often in years to come; they mention every one that I know (except yourself) and a host more, every one that you know and a few more; and there is a very full index to them. . . .

No, do not send me the Tree book: it will arrive in the next parcel from the Times Book Club. . . .

There follows an account of a characteristic dialogue between Teixeira and his dentist:

New (enumerating every action, like a comic-conjurer): "Spray!"

Tex: "Oremus!" . . .

I wish, he writes on 6. 10. 20, that I had no correspondent but you: what good stuff I could write to you! But 19 letters in one day: think of it! . . .

My age is a melancholy one. The man of 50 or 60 sees all his acquaintances and friends dying off in ones and twos: Heinemann and Williamson to-day; who will it be to-morrow? When

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he's 70, he begins to be a sole survivor, with no friends left to lose.

You will find the Tree book amusing as you go on with it. Four-fifths of it represent the life of a dead fairy told by living fairies, one wittier and more whimsical than the others. I confess to tittering over Viola's "screwing their screws to the sticking-point" and "peacocks held in the leash." And that's a glorious portrait of Julius, though, when I knew him, he was more mature and more majestic. . . .

On 11. 10. 20 he breaks into verse:

*My very dear Stephen McKenna,
I'm reading your Lilith again,
With much intellectual pleasure
And some little physical pain.
This jingle shaped itself within my head
As I stepped to my table from my bed.*

*It's that physical pain I'm after for the present.
The book hurts my eyes. . . .*

I've had a little petty cash from the Couperus books. It's been amusing to see that Small Souls in a given six months produces 15 times as much in America as in this benighted country. . . .

Though he commonly kept his religion and politics to himself, Teixeira's sympathy with

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the Irish moved him to write, 27. 10. 20:

*I'm angrily unhappy at the death of McSwiney.
To kill a man with a face like that! Compare
the faces of those who killed him! . . .*

*It's a brute of a world that the sun is shining
on so brightly. . . .*

I had contemplated spending the winter in a voyage up the Amazon, but abandoned it in favour of one down the east coast of South America. Teixeira comments, 29. 10. 20:

Your new voyage is the more sensible and interesting by far. What's Amazon to you or you to Amazon? I pictured you and trembled for you, steaming slowly up that mighty river between alligators taking pot-shots at you with poisoned pea-shooters from one bank and humming-birds yapping split infinitives at you from the other. You will be much better off on board your goodish coasting tramp. . . .

. . . It interested me, he adds, 20. 10. 20, to read in this morning's Times that Brazilian stock has risen a couple of points at the news of your contemplated visit. I hope that Argentine rails will follow suit. . . .

[A lady] when returning Shane Leslie's book,

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which I had lent to her and she enjoyed . . . had the asinine effrontery to write to me . . . of "McSwiney's farcical death." Isn't it dreadful to think that the world has given birth to women who can write like that?

Can death ever be farcical? We know that the epithet is wholly inapposite in the present instance. But can death ever be farcical? I told you, I think, of Major Johnson, who, throwing hot coppers from the balcony of the Grand Hôtel in Paris at the crowd cheering Kruger, overbalanced himself, fell to the pavement and was killed. That is the nearest approach to a farcical death that I can think of. But I should call it ironical. A farcical death. Alas! . . .

On 31. 10. 20 he writes:

I fear you will have a hell of a windy time at Deal or Dover or wherever Walmer Castle has its being (Walmer perhaps, as an afterthought)? It is blowing half a gale here. The Dutch say "to lie like a horse-thief." The English ought to say "to lie like a guide-book." One lies before me at this moment:

"In fact, Ventnor is a sun-box; and the east and north winds would have to confess that they

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have not even a visiting acquaintance with her."

At the same moment, these self-same winds are "a-sharting in my ear":

"We don't confess to nothink of the sort!

Ho, leave us in yer will before yer die!"

'Tis well to be you, looking forward to sailing the Spanish Main. . . .

Of Philip Guedalla's *Supers and Supermen*, Teixeira writes, 7. 11. 20:

I have got it out of the Times Book Club because of a kindly notice. There are two or three delicious plums in it. . . .

Among the happy phrases is one—"nudging us with his inimitably knowing inverted commas"—to which I would in my mean, Parthian way call your attention, as bearing upon one of our recent controversies. . . .

*What is B. N. C., a Noxford college mentioned in Galsworthy's book?*¹ *he asks, 10. 11. 20. Bras (?z) enos? How I hate these initials! . . .*

On St. Stanislaus' Day, he writes:

Many thanks for your letter of yesterday (which was the eve of St. Stanislaus) . . . I have no . . . bright social news for you.

¹ In Chancery.

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Yet stay.

A card was left upon me, a few days ago, by Captain Cave-Brown-Cave, R. N., with a verbal message:

"Would Mr. Teixeira-de-Mattos-Teixeira care for a rubber of bridge one afternoon?"

Yesterday I accepted the soft invitation and took 14/- off Captain Cave-Brown-Cave and his fellow troglodytes. This would have been £7 at my normal points.

These are our island adventures.

Here is your Inevitable.

Make me a list (will you?) of people who to your knowledge have entreated me hospitably during the past twelve-month, so that I may send them copies of this or some other book when Christmas cometh round.

With their addresses, please, of which I remembreth not one single one. . . .

I had been recommended to go from Buenos Aires across the Andes to Valparaiso and to come home by Chile, Peru and the Panama Canal rather than to sail twice over the same course between Buenos Aires and Southampton.

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Teixeira comments on this change of plans in his letter of 16. 11. 20:

They have had a cyclone, I see, at "Baires," as the wireless used to have it at the W. T. I. D; but, as we had a gale y'day at Ventnor, there's not much in that. On the other hand, how do you propose to travel from Baires to Paradise Valley? I ask in all ignorance: is there a railway? I know there are Argentine Rails; but are the Andes tunnelled? If not, what about it? You can travel from London to Ventnor via Cowes but also via Ryde; in my days, the route from Baires to Valparaiso knew but one method: to Ride, if you like, but to Ride via Llamas. Let me warn you, a llama would spit in your eye as soon as look at you. And you not knowing a word of the language! How's it to be done, Stephen, how's it to be done? There are bits of the Andes where you cross a crevasse, llama and all, in a basket slung on a rope which stretches from precipice to precipice. Of all the cinematographic stunts! Well, there! Have you a nice revolver? . . .

. . . Tell me what you think that you are going to eat between Baires and Valparaiso, he adds next day. They grow comparatively few fish on

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the slopes or even on the crests of the Andes. . . .

As a matter of curiosity, write to me to-morrow what your weather was like now at 9.15 a. m. to-day. I am sitting at a wide-open window actually perspiring (saving your presence) with heat.

I reassured him as best I could (17. 11. 20) :

. . . Those who know tell me that there is a perfectly good railway from Buenos Aires to Valparaiso with a permanent way, rolling stock, points and signals, tunnels to taste and all the paraphernalia that one might buy on a small scale at Hamley's toy-shop. The Andes ought, of course, to be crossed on mule-back, but this takes long and I do not know any mules. Nor, from your exposition of their habits, am I desirous of meeting any llamas. . . .

My faithful Stephen, many thanks for your three letters, he writes, 21. 11. 20. I've been feeling rather out of sorts these last few days and have not written to you since Thursday, I believe; not that I have much to tell you . . . except that, were I weller and stronger, I should write and offer my sword to that maligned monarch, Constantine I. of the Hellenes. I am growing heartily sick of seeing countries meddling in other countries' business. . . .

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It were the baldest side on my part, he confesses on 23. 11. 20 to pretend that the weather here has not turned cold. The winds are what is known as bitter. But the sun is shining like blazes. And there you have what I was leading up to: once bitter, twice shining.

Ever yours,

Alexander Crawshay.

Not content with emulating Mrs. Robert Crawshay's wit and appropriating her name, Teixeira laid his witticism before her and challenged her to say that it was not of the true brand. There is a reference to this in a later letter; his next communication was a picture-postcard of Ventnor, annotated by himself:

A. [A bathchair man] This is not me.

B. [A child with a hoop] Nor is this, really.

C. [An indistinguishable figure] This might be.

D. [A picture of the hotel] But probably I am here, lurking in the Royal Hotel, where I can see the sea but the sea can't see me.

I think little of your latest joke, I wrote, 24. 11. 20, and have myself made several of late that put yours into the shade. Thus, on learning

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that a woman of my acquaintance had left her rich husband and run away with a penniless lover, I added the conclusion that they were now living in silver-gilt splendour. I can assure you that that is far more in the true Crawshay tradition. . . .

My effort met with less than no approval:

My poor Stephen!, Teixeira wrote 25. 11. 20. The worst of your jokes, when you attempt to play upon words, is that they have all been made before. It must be 36 (thirty-six) years (I said, years) since I saw at the old Strand Theatre a play called Silver Guilt parodying The Silver King.

I am glad or sorry, whichever I should be, that your arm¹ has taken (arma virumque cano: beat that if you can! Virus poison, acc. (I hope and trust) virum). . . .

My conscience smites me, he writes, 26. 11. 20, for having omitted in either of my last two letters to express the sympathy which I feel with Seymour Leslie—and you—in this serious illness of his. What is it exactly? Whatever it may be, I hope that he will get the better of it. . . .

His aunt Crawshay has been good enough to

¹ In preparation for visiting South America I had been vaccinated.

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pass "once bitter, twice shining." She says that it "is a really worthy phrase and will be of use to us all!". . .

I have been reading a lot of French lately, in those very cheap, double-columned, illustrated editions. It is perfectly marvellous to see how happily the French draughtsmen succeed in catching their authors' ideas, whereas one may safely say that "our" British illustrators do not catch them once in ten times. Why is this? I am not sure that a certain rough, unwashed Bohemianism is not at the bottom of it, achieving results which are beyond that prim, priggish mode of life which nowadays governs the artists on this side. I may be wrong: I certainly couldn't elaborate my theory; on the other hand, I may be perfectly right. . . .

In an earlier letter I had asked why he sought a refuge where he could see the sea but where the sea could not see him. The answer is given in a postscript:

I might turn giddy if the sea saw me; but it would look very ugly if I saw it.

By way of revenge I reminded Teixeira that the gender of *virus* was neuter:

Alas!, he replies, 27. 11. 20.

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I suspected it at the time; and now my up-rooted hairs are begloomng the pink geraniums below my window. I have taken my oath; and now you and I are pledged: no French, you; no Greek or Latin, I. It may be all for the best.

And arma virusqus cano would have sounded so much better! . . .

Returning to the subject of French Illustration, he adds, 28. II. 20:

It's the knock-about, rough-and-tumble, café life in Paris I expect, that accounts for the greater success of the French illustrators. They all of them meet all the authors in the great Bourse à poignées de main that are the Paris coffee-houses. The subjects are discussed over a thousand books; and the draughtsman is not overpaid. . . . What I'm "after" is this, that the British illustrators, sitting at home in their neatly-swept flats or studios, decorated mainly with Japanese fans, furnished with wives instead of mistresses, that these smug dogs, with their pappy brains, cannot turn out such good work or enter so well into the spirit of things, as the Frenchman. And, if all this sounds damned immoral, I can't help it.

The shadow of Christmas fell across Teix-

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eira's mind so early as the first day of December:

I ask myself, he writes:

"What shall I give this Stephen? A book? . . . But he's got a book! . . . Ah, but has he a three-volume novel? No, bedad! . . . And, as I live, I don't believe that Violet Moses is included in his collected edition of the works of that mighty writer, Leonard Merrick."

So here's a first edition for you, with my blessing. [Your secretary] should try to remove the labels with that nastiest of utensils, a wet, hot sponge. . . .

For the first time in many months Teixeira was driven back on *The Wrong Box* to find an adequate comparison with the informative newcomer who now disturbed the noiseless tenour of his way:

Joseph Finsbury has arrived, he writes, 2. 12. 20. Overhearing me tell my wife that Bucharest is the capital of Roumania, he leant forward and asked me if I had been to Bucharest. Tex: No.

Joseph: Oh, I thought I heard you mention Bucharest.

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Tex: I sometimes mention places which I have never visited.

Joseph: Bucharest is a second Paris.

Tex: Grrrrrrrrmph!

Joseph: Though I daresay it has been destroyed by now.

Tex: (to his wife). .Have you done with Femina? If so, I'll give it to those Dutch ladies. (Stalks off to Mrs. and Miss van L.)

Joseph: (to an Irish widow) I have been to all the capitals of Europe . . . (and holds the wretched Mrs. N. enthralled, so I am told, for two mortal hours). . . .

Later. Joseph (to [my wife]): How clever of your husband to speak Dutch to those ladies! [My wife]: Not at all! He's a Dutchman.

Joseph: I know Holland very well. I have been to Rotterdam. I have been to Java. The finest botanical gardens in the world are at Buitenzorg near Batavia.

[My wife]: Re-e-ally!

Can you Teixeira asks, 2. 12. 20, lend me that book by James Joyce (Portrait of the Artist), which you once wrote to me about? I see Barbellion praises it enthusiastically in the new diary.

Would you like me to lend you A Last Diary or have you bought it?

Your Uncle Joseph was in disgrace yesterday.

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We have a girl trio of musicians here, who play at tea-time and eke after dinner. The pianist reports that he said to her:

"I have been to Japan. I was very ill there and I found myself in the arms of a Japanese woman."

To-day he stopped me in the road and said:

"I wish I could speak Dutch, sir, as well as you speak English. I once learnt a continental language, but I mustn't speak it now. What it was" (throwing out his arms) "you can guess. . . ."

I had read Barbellion's two books without sharing Teixeira's admiration for them, in part because I thought that a book of self-revelation so unreserved should only have been published posthumously, in part because it was incongruous—to use no stronger word—to find a man, who had aroused wide-spread compassion by what was taken to be the account of his last hours, reading with relish the sympathetic press notices which it brought him.

To this criticism Teixeira replies, 5. 12. 20:

Thank you for your two letters and the loan of James Joyce. . . . Barbellion I like and al-

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most love—I should love him entirely but for a common strain in him that makes itself heard occasionally—but then I was taught very early in life to make every allowance for men of any genius, whereas you look for the public-school attitude towards all and sundry. Apart from this, B. seems to me to have borne almost unparalleled suffering with remarkable courage and to have shown a good deal of pluck besides in laying bare his soul in the midst of it all.

You see, if one cared to take the pains, one could make you detest pretty well everybody you know and like. For everybody has a mean, petty, shabby, cowardly side to him; and one has only to tell you of what the man in question chooses to keep concealed. B. chose to reveal it; that's all about it. . . .

My wife bids you be sure to say good-bye, when you go on your travels, to the woman, whoever she may be, in whom you are most interested. Her reason is that she dreamt two nights ago that you were prevented from doing so. This does not imply that you will not return alive. It means only that something prevented you from saying good-bye to that person and that it would be fun to stultify the dream. . . .

On 7. 12. 20 Teixeira writes:

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. . . *I am reading James Joyce, skippily. The fellow has a great deal of talent, but much of it is misdirected. I should not be surprised if one day he began to write books that he and his country will be proud of. . . .*

Incidentally I admire his ruthless suppression of capitals and am interested in his ditto ditto of hyphens. . . .

On Christmas Eve, he writes:

Forgive us our Christmases as we forgive them that Christmas against us.

What I want to know by your next letter and what you have not told me, though you may think that you have, is how you propose to travel home from the west coast of South America. . . .

And on 27. 12. 20:

I was asked to "recite" yesterday! I refused. I was asked to take part in a hypnotic experiment: would I rather be the professor or the subject?

"The subject," I replied. "But I would even rather be dead."

And on 29. 12. 20:

. . . This is the last letter but one or two

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which I shall be writing to you before you sail or puff down the Solent. . . . Needless to add that I feel sad at the thought of your imminent departure and glad at the thought that you appear to feel a trifle sad too.

The Almanzora! Well, God speed her across the Atlantic! But she's got a plaguy hair-dressing name. On my dressing-table stand two bottles and two only. One contains Anzora cream; the other Pandora brilliantine. Both are meant to preserve and beautify my already well-preserved and beautiful hair. I must try to "become" some Almanzora to keep them company. . . .

XIII

The diary which Teixeira kept for me during my absence in South America was, so far as I am aware, his first venture in this kind of literature. Approaching it with trepidation, he abandoned it with loathing. The mystery of a double cash-column quickly palled; and he was not long intrigued even by printed reminders of the moon's phases and of the days on which dividends and insurance-policy renewals became due.

30 December 1920.

As a large number of these Diaries circulate abroad it may be well to point out that the Astronomical Data, such as phases of the moon etc. are given in Greenwich time.

Perhaps it may be as well, Teixeira concurs, 30. 12. 20.

31 December 1920.

I did not see the old year out. I played 1/— bridge in the afternoon at Captain Cave-Brown-

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Cave's, with him, Captain B. and Dr. F. and won
£—18.0.

which at normal points would have been 9. 5. 0.
(I presume that is what the right-hand column
is for. But the left-hand column? Ah, that
left-hand column! . . .)

The last that I saw of the old year was a 68-
7-0, grey-haired parson in pumps and a prince-
consort moustache and whiskers waltzing a polka,
or polkering a waltz—in short, dancing something
exceedingly modern—with a 15-7-0 flapper.
Then we went to bed, wondering how Stephen
was spending his New Year's Eve, on board the
Almanzora, in a south-westerly gale.

Saturday, 1 January.

When at 5.30 I switched on my light and
rose, I saw a leprechaun standing on my writing-
table, looking like a little sandwich-man. Fear-
lessly I approached; and he changed into a bottle
of eau-de-Cologne with an envelope slung round
his neck, inscribed, "To my Best Beloved."
Mark [my wife's] bold capitals. And show
me another couple whose united ages amount to
117 years or more and who still do this sort of
thing. O olden times and olden manners! . . .

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Monday, 3 January.

Bridge at Cave's with Captain B. and Dr. C.

[My wife:] "*What did you talk about at tea?*"

Tex: "Jam."

This question and answer never vary, after my return from a visit to the C.-B.-C's. . . .

I foresee that this compilation is going to rival the Diary of a Nobody. And I am pledged to keep it up until the 7th of March. Kismet! Or, as the dying Nelson said, "Kismet, Hardy."

Wednesday, 5 January.

Dividends due *What dividends?*

Sunday, 9 January.

Thank goodness that I have only space to thank goodness that I have only space wherein . . . ad infinitum. . . .

Thursday, 13 January.

Received from Stephen's mother his letter to his mother. . . .

Received from Lady D. Stephen's letter to [her] and wrote to her in appropriate terms, expressing doubts upon Stephen's dietary while

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crossing the South-American continent, where there are neither fish nor eggs, save the eggs of condors and hummingbirds. . . .

Friday, 14 January.

. . . My bank-balance is overdrawn, but I make 19/6 at bridge.

. . . Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Martin arrive. I do not know if this is the Daily News' Irish correspondent whom the Black and Tans wanted to murder.

Tuesday, 18 January.

Begin Couperus' Iskander: The novel of Alexander the Great; two enormous volumes, which I may hardly live to translate. It is a great joy to see this artist building up his story with firm and elegant perfection from the very first page, with conviction and a fine self-confidence, no grouping, no floundering, no hesitation. . . .

Saturday, 23 January.

Need something happen every day at Ventnor? Danged if there need!

Monday, 24 January.

. . . The new rich arrive, Rolls-Royce and all.

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Tuesday, 25, January.

Those new rich! So new, so rich, so drearily unostentatious! Young new richard bald, pansnayed, ill-dressed; young new wife and sister-in-law dowdy; young new secretary without a dinner-jacket to his backside; young new baby and young new nurse all over the place; young new Rolls-Royce, careering over the island, the only sign of wealth.

If only there were a few diamonds, a few banded cigars, a few h's dropping on the floor with a dull thud, one could at least laugh. But the drabness, the gloom of these particular new rich: O my lungs and O my liver! . . .

Thursday, 27 January.

It is terrible, the number of people who come to this hotel; and I regret the pleasant, non-"paying" days when we were six visitors and three musicians, with a full staff of servants to wait on us. There are now over thirty people at meals, one uglier than the other. And as soon as one goes two others take his place. . . .

Sunday, 30 January.

. . . To bed at 5, with my "special dinner" at 7, John Francis Taylor's meal: "Give me

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some milk; and let the milk be hot. And give me some bread; and let the bread be inside the milk."

Monday, 31 January.

The Insurance herein contained is not valid until your name has been registered.

I don't care. Yer can 'ave the insurance. The new rich have some business visitors.

Tuesday, 1 February.

. . . Departure of the new riches' little thyn-dicate of friends.

Arrival of the dividend on my Benson & Hedges' 10% 2nd pref., the only shares wherein I have ever invested that have ever paid any dividend whatever. Lord, how I have moiled and toiled to sink money in stumer companies! Shrewsbury & Talbot Hansoms! Galician Oil-fields! Rubber substitutes! Cork substitutes! Tampico-Panuco Deferred! United Transport Co.! In the three last I still have holdings: about £250 in all. And the things that I have inherited: thousand of dollars' worth of Mexican (and Turkish and Hungarian and Russian) rubbish, which would barely fetch a tenner, all told! . . .

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Thursday, 3 February.

. . . The new arrivals include a long, lean man . . . and his wife. His hair is dyed to suggest 55; he is probably a cadaverous 77. He comes down to dinner in a white tie and tails. His digestion is of the weakest. He refuses soup, leaves the fish, refuses a cutlet, leaves the goose and seems to dine mainly on *crème Beau Rivage*, which is a *crème carmel* decorated with a blob of whipped cream and *angelica*. His conversation with his wife consists purely of whispered smiles.

Friday, 4 February.

I received letters from Stephen to me and from Stephen to his mother. I have still to receive a letter from Stephen to Lady D. . . .

On his return he will borrow from me Frank Harris' second series of Contemporary Portraits, just arrived from New York.

There is no bridge at the Home-Sweet-Homes. I go to the club, play with P. the local solicitor; Dr. W., of Harrogate; Mr. S., of the same and win the sum of £——2½d.

Saturday, 5 February and

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Sunday, 6 February

An episode of "And oh, the children's voices in the lounge!" was followed by my going to the office and saying:

"I am going to bed lest these children be the death of me. May I have a special dinner, please?"

"Certainly. What would you like?"

"Send me some milk and let the milk be hot. And send me some bread and let the bread be inside the milk."

Next morning, having slept eight hours and fifteen minutes, I went to the manageress and:

"People," I said, "are far too proud of their children and too fond of displaying them in public. . . . There is nothing wonderful about parentage and nothing clever. Most people are parents. I have been one myself. . . . Children should be seen and not heard. . . . If they raise their voices in the public rooms, they should be sent to their bedrooms. Some would suggest the coal-hole; but I, as you know, have a gentle heart. . . . Remember that we live in an age of reprisals. The privilege of screaming and yelling is not confined to children. Adults enjoy equal rights. Next time a child raises its voice in my presence, I shall in quick succession bellow

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like a bull, roar like a lion, howl like a jackal, laugh like a hyena. If you drive me to it, I shall copy all the shriller domestic animals. . . . The matter is now in your hands."

Monday, 7 February.

Peace reigns at Ventnor. . . .

Wednesday, 16 February.

. . . I start my sock-and-tie stunt, which consists in "copycatting" daily, Austin Read seconding, an absurd young man of half my age. Thus do the elderly amuse themselves for the further amusement of a limited circle. . . .

Tuesday, 22 February.

Stephen's letter of 20.1.21 to his mother arrives. [I again varied my itinerary and had decided to make my way to Valparaiso through the Straits of Magellan rather than across the Andes.] So he is travelling in the wake of H. M. S. Beagle and the late Charles Robert Darwin! He'll be perished with cold; but he's more likely to get a fish or two to eat. . . .

Sunday, 27 February.

Stephen's birthday. His health shall be drunk in brimming barley-water; and, though I believe

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he has already had a birthday-present, he shall have a copy of The Tour the moment it arrives. Good luck to him!

P. S. Absolutely a good notice of The Tour in the Sunday Times. My wife says that the critic must have been drunk.

Monday, 28 February.

Arrival of a terrible Yorkshire group, two men and a woman. . . . They foregather with . . . a man who appears in carpet-slippers, like Kipps, and talk of nothing but food, in broad Leeds.

Tuesday, 1 March.

. . . "Ah had hum-und-eggs to my breakfast this morning. Ah was always partial to hum-und-eggs for breakfast. . . . Ah had new potai-i-toes ut the dinner. Ah said to McKanner, 'These are too good to pass.' We had summon with 'em, summon und new potai-i-toes."

They seem to be bank-managers and to have dined with Reggie at some London City and Midland Bank-wet. . . .

Thursday, 3 March.

T. takes me to East Dene, the childhood home of Swinburne, now a convent of the Sacred Heart.

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I am shown over the entrancing grounds by the Mother Superior. Before taking me into the chapel:

"You are not a catholic, I suppose?" she asks.

"Indeed I am."

"I mean, a Roman catholic?"

"Reverend mother, are there any others?"

"Oh, they all call themselves Anglican catholics nowadays!"

Then on to Craigie Lodge, where Pearl Hobbes pesters the tenants with trivial spirit-messages.

Home, feeling cold as death. . . .

Saturday, 5 March.

. . . I am correcting proofs of The Three Eyes for Hurst & Blackett. Altogether I shall have four books out this spring.

The Tour, Butterworth.

The Three Eyes, Hurst & Blackett.

Majesty, Dodd.

More Hunting Wasps, Dodd.

Not so bad for an owld, infirm mahn!

Sunday, 6 March.

It is pleasant to see the sun gain strength daily, with every sort of flower appearing, al-

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mond-blossoms in full swing, cherry-blossoms hard at it and pear-blossoms making a beginning.

Monday, 7 March.

Departure of [the married Yorkshire visitors.]

"Thank God, they're gone!" the survivor is heard to say.

Arrival of the survivor's women-folk. He sees them to their rooms and comes down to gloat over some woman. When his wife returns to the hall:

"Hullo, Helen!" he says. "Are ye dahn ol-ready?" And repeats the bright question: "Hullo, Helen! Are ye dahn olready?"

What a people, the men of Yorkshire! . . .

Wednesday, 9 March.

I begin a collodial sulphur treatment . . . for that picturesque right leg of mine. Irving's left leg was a poem (Oscar Wilde); my right leg is a money-box, adorned with three patches the size of a shilling, a sixpence and a groat, all very nice and silvery. I asked [the doctor] whether it was leprosy or dropsy. He said it was soriasis, scoriasis, scloriasis: I don't know which and I don't care.

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Thursday, 10 March.

The [other Yorkshire visitors] are to go on Monday, when I can say:

"Thank God, they're gone!"

And I pray that the table next to ours may not be given to people with provincial accents. Let it be noted that the friend of "McKannar" is manager of the—branch of the L. J. C. M. at Leeds, so that, when I go to live at Leeds, I may bank elsewhere. . . .

Friday, 11 March.

At the club, I win 1861 points at bridge in 90 minutes.

	£. s. d.
<i>In money, at 2½d the 100, this represents</i>	4 0
<i>At the Cleveland it would have represented</i>	9 12 0
<i>At the Reform Club it would have represented</i>	2 8 0

Sunday, 13 March.

John ("Shane") Leslie's book on Cardinal Manning seems to me very good. Leslie is very nasty to Purcell, who no doubt deserves it.

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Monday, 14 March.

Departure of [the last Yorkshireman], leaving his women-people behind him. He asked for it and he shall have it:

"Thank God he's gone!"

He used to stare at me till I devised the retort: closing my eyelids and yawning at him like a lion.

I think I must talk to Reggie about him some day.

Tuesday, 15 March.

. . . The hotel is filling up madly for Easter. There will be more here then than at Christmas. Help! . . .

Thursday, 17 March.

S. Patrick > First Quarter, 3.49 a. m.

Well, I went to church to pray for Ireland: what else was there to be done?

Stephen's return seems to be unduly delayed; and I've forgotten the name of his ship.

Friday, 18 March.

The sun shines in the morning.

The rain falls in the afternoon.

I play a little bridge.

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The sun shines all day.

*Thank God, a letter from Stephen and an end
to this beastly diary!*

XIV

Teixeira continued to live at Ventnor until the beginning of May, with spirits, health and powers of work all steadily improving. He returned to London in time to welcome Couperus, who arrived in the middle of the month and was entertained privately and publicly for five or six weeks.

I don't know exactly when you'll be back, he writes, II. 3. 21, but I welcome you home with all my heart . . . and with an S. O. S.

The title of [Couperus'] The Inevitable¹ has been forestalled, in a novel publishing with Holden & Harlingham. And I want another good title in a hurry. Can you help me?

There is always:

Cornélie.

Wilkie Collins would have called it:

Could She Do Otherwise?

George Egerton would have said:

¹ Ultimately this was published with the title: *The Law Inevitable*.

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The Woman Who Went Back.

(But that's giving the solution away too soon).

*Is there a possible title with "Doom" or
"Fate" in it?*

Henry James:

How Cornélie Ended.

Stephen McKenna:

The Reluctant Plover.

George Robey:

Did She Fall or Was She Pushed?

The Bible:

(unquotable)

Tex:

*Anything on the Wilkie Collins lines over-
leaf.*

The Lure of Fate.

Could She Avoid It?

It Had To Be.

And, as I said, there's always:

Cornélie. . . .

*Welcome home, my dear Stephen, he writes,
19. 3. 21. . . .*

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I look forward, with pleasure, to receiving your diary and soon you may look backward, with disgust, to having received mine.

My health has made very reasonable progress and my wife is exceedingly well. Frank Dodd visits us for two days on Thursday: how we shall be after that . . . well, how shall we be after that? . . .

On 27. 3. 21 he writes:

Dodd arrived on Thursday: I say, he arrived. He arrived by travelling from London to Southampton in a luggage-van with a first-class ticket (what's the penalty for that?); by running his boat into the mud 10 minutes from Cowes; by missing his connection; by changing at Ryde; and by repeating his offence "thence" and "hither": i. e. travelling with the same ticket in a second luggage-van. At 9 p. m. he arrived, greeting me with the words:

"I've had nothing to eat since breakfast."

You should have seen the poor fellow torn between two longings, with a plateful of soup before him while waiting for a Ventnor cocktail, consisting of 98% Plymouth gin and 2% orange bitters.

We motored him on Friday to Blackgang, to Chale, to Carisbrooke, to Newport, to Brading,

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to Bembridge, to Sandown, to Shanklin and back. Having already familiarized himself with Cowes and Ryde, he declared that he had now seen every city in the Isle of Wight except Freshwater.

I lay low about Yarmouth, but yesterday I walked him back from Bonchurch, after my doctor had motored us "thither."

We did a lot of talking in between, but he did not sap my vitality. . . . He left after tea for France, via Southhampton and Havre; and I was able to sit up, take nourishment and even stand and watch a ball-room full of people dance Lent out on what the festive programme called "Easter Saturday": Christians, you may or may not be aware, call it Holy Saturday. . . .

And on 31. 3. 21:

. . . I booked a seat on a four-in-hand this morning to go to certain point-to-point races; cancelled it; received an invitation from my young doctor to take me there in his car; declined it, feeling too weak and sulphurous. . . . I have a leg, like Sir Willoughby what's-his-name; but this leg is covered with patterns (Sir Willoughby Patterne, was it?) and to cure it I am covered and lined with brimstone. It is not curing; and I am just tempersome, that's all. . . .

In answer to my question what he would

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like for a birthday present, he replies, 3. 4. 21:

This is one of the days on which I feel like nothing on earth. Yet I must answer your three letters to the best of my enfeebled power. . . . I want a Catholic Dictionary

or

Drummond's Life of Erasmus

or

a second-hand copy of either will be quite acceptable: the second is an old book and probably out of print.

five fumable cigars "from stock"; but a present I must have because I am working a stunt about the immense number of birthday gifts which I am sure of receiving. The Cleveland Club is being canvassed with this intent and the members urged to make canvass-backed ducks and drakes of their money: oh, how like nothing on earth I feel after being brought to bed of this joke! I am to have a cake with 56 candles in it from my doctor's wife, which her name is Phyllis Twigg; so let no one send me an other. If I ate more than 56 candles at my age, I should have to go in cossack-cloth and ashes for the rest of my life; oh, like nothing on earth, Stephen, like nothing on earth! . . .

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The acknowledgement of the birthday present had to be delayed while Teixeira described his effort to observe an eclipse:

I ordered a pail and some water ("and let the water be inside the pail") to be placed on the lawn this morning, so that I might observe the eclipse of the sun. The eclipse was over before I got down; as the pail was bright white that made no difference. Things looked very uncanny from my bedroom window and I tried to tremble like a Red Indian: they tremble, as you know, like Red Indianything. . . .

It was written on the morrow of his birthday, 10. 4. 21:

Many thanks for your letter of the 8th, for your good wishes and for a noble Catholic Dictionary, with which I was mightily pleased. It will be of great value to me if I live (a) to edit The Autumn of the Middle Ages, by Huisinga and (b) to translate The Land of Rembrand, by Busken Huet, two monumental tasks which I have been discussing with Dodd. . . .

You have presumably bought Queen Victoria, by the side of which Eminent Victorians is quite a dull book. And I read that, on Friday last,

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eight gentleman were seen sitting in a row in Kensington Gardens, all reading Strachey's book. If, however K. G. were closed to the public on Friday, then the story is mythical. . . .

Your birthday-stunt worked wonders. Miracles never cease: R — sent me an Omar Khayyam! R. a round or circular photograph-frame of a precious metal known as silver. N. F. 25 cigars of the por Laranaga flavor. B. 50 of the flavour known as Romeo y Julieta. P. 100 cigarettes of the snake-charming flavour, which, being manufactured from the finest high-grade selected Turkish leaf tobacco, must be exchanged for the cigarettes of Ole Virginny when I am next in hail of one of Messrs. Salmon & Gladstone's famous establishments.

This exhausts your list. Over and above these gifts, I received from S. an Umps, i. e. a biscuit-ware naked doll, with wings, practicable arms and a heart in the right, non-committal place, in the middle of its chest. Also, a neat black and grey tie. From Mrs. H. a tie. . . . From my wiff a tie and a pair of mittens, for elderly early-morning wear. From the manageress of the hotel, a knitted canary waistcoat with sapphire buttons to cover the nudity of the Umps. From an anonymous admirer, a smaller naked doll, made, I venture to think, of celluloid-georgette. From

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a lady staying at the hotel, a box of Sainsbury's chocolates, which are the most toothsome in the world. From G. H., aged 80, and F., his wife, age 75, a box of other chocolates, and 50 De Reske cigarettes. From A. T., aged 6, bought with her own money, a bottle of ink and a ball of twine. From her mother, P. T., neé McKenna—nay, Mackenzie—two blue-bird electric-light shades.

The T's, who belong to my local doctor, in the proportion of one wife and one daughter, also gave me a birthday party. To meet me were invited Dr. C., Dr. F., and Captain Cave-Brown-Cave. It opened with an ode or oratorio about fairies and happiness, intoned by Anne and Dr. C. to an accompaniment by Mrs. T. Then Anne put her arms round my neck, embraced me tenderly and told me not to mind what Mrs. Teixeira said about my touting for presents: Mrs. Teixeira didn't mean it, couldn't mean it; and Anne didn't believe it, couldn't believe it. With the tears streaming down the knees of my cashmere trouserings, I was led in to tea to see my name spelt in letter-biscuits and my birthday-cake surrounded by 56 pink, green, white and red candles. Then we played bridge and I won eight shillings. And I doubt if Queen Victoria ever described a birthday more fully.

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No, she would not have forgotten, as I nearly forgot, that F. E. W. also sent me a tie. . . .

In the middle of the month, Teixeira began to make preparations, for his return:

Should you happen, he writes, 14. 4. 21, to buy a steam-yacht, in addition to a motor-car, before the 5th of May, you might send her for us: we would as soon travel that way, land at the Temple stairs and lunch with you while the yacht takes our luggage up-river to Chelsea. . . .

You have evidently misunderstood my motives in deciding to buy a car, I began to explain.

Get a neat, unobstrusive disk with "Hackney Carriage" fitted to it, he interposed: you can make a tidy income out of your car then, when the Muse (should I say the Garage?) fails you.

. . . If, he writes, 19. 4. 21, you have not blewed or blued (which is it?) your last fiver, consider whether your library is really complete without the Greville Memoirs. Strachey's book will probably have set you lusting for them.

They contain the original story about "speaking disrespectfully of the Equator." . . .

I send you the second edition of Harris' life of Oscar. You have already read the first edit-

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ion. But you will like to see such things, if any, in the appendix as may be new and certainly Shaw's contribution to the end. . . .

I had the misfortune to offend Teixeira by quoting a passage from Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough*:

I save my temper, he writes, 22. 4. 21, by not discussing religion except with Catholics or politics except with liberals. There's room for discussion in the nuances, there's too much room for it with those who call my black white. I never dispute the goodness of certain infidels nor the wickedness of many of the faithful. What I hate is the smug-smiling affectation of superiority displayed by the agnostics. . . .

Huxley I have proved guilty—at least to my own satisfaction—of intellectual dishonesty and financial turpitude; of Frazer I know nothing whatever. I vaguely pictured him as one of several distinguished compilers of whom I knew nothing; that beastly quotation at the head of one of your chapters came as a great shock to me, which grew into a very cataclysm when I found it followed by another and a longer one.

I won't call you an Englishman again. But it

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is funny that you can't write about yourself without going into the matter of what you think or do not think about religion. . . .

I forgot to tell you, he writes, 24. 4. 21, that I received y'day, from Jack Tennant, from a house with an improbable name, in a Scotch county which I had never heard of (Morayshire), a salmon—the whole bird—weighing 7½ lbs. and measuring somewhere about 7½ feet. I distributed 3 lbs. to my doctor and 3 lbs. to the heir presumptive to the Cave-Brown-Cave baronetcy (with apologies for the radical source of the gift). My wiff and I ate 3 oz. of it to our dinner; and the remainder was consumed by the manageress, the bookkeeper and housekeeper of the Royal Hotel. . . .

Ten days later his preparations were complete.

Unless I ring you up at 11, on Friday, he writes, 3. 5. 21, I will be with you at 11, as suggested in your letter—the morning is still my best time—and lunch at the club.

XV

In the summer and autumn of 1921 Teixeira enjoyed better health than at any time in the last seven years. He supported without ill-effects the strain of incessant luncheon and dinner-parties during the visit of Couperus to London; he moved from house to house, staying with friends; he completed his unfinished work and laid ambitious schemes for the future.

I have written to Couperus, he told me, 13. 5. 21, preparing him to be entertained by the Titmarsh Club and by the Asquiths. . . .

You might tell me in an early letter what to do in proposing [him] for temporary honorary membership of the Reform Club and when to do it. . . .

My dear Stephen, he writes, 16. 5. 21;

My dear Stephen, he repeats;

The second allocution sounds almost superfluous; but I will not waste a sheet of Ryman's priceless Hertford Bank. I intended the "M"

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of "My dear Stephen" to form the "M" of "Many thanks for your letter of the 14th." However, you may remember that the only difference between Moses and Manchester is that one ends in -oses and the other in -anchester; and there you are. . . .

I am calling on the Netherlands minister at half-past eleven this morning. . . . Bisschop (of the Anglo-Batavian Society) rang me up on Saturday evening. . . . There is to be a council-meeting at 4 o'clock on Friday at the International Law Association in King's Bench Walk. . . . If you are back by Friday and likely to be at home, I'll come on to see you from there. And I'll write to you to-morrow about my call on Van Swinderen. . . .

P. S. to my former letter, he writes on the same day: *Van Swinderen* was most charming. He at once offered to have the Dutch reading at the legation. . . . I said that, if *Van S.* would make it an invitation matter, he would be doing a great honour to C. and giving a very welcome reception to the Dutch colony in London. . . .

He leapt at this; said he would give a dinner to twenty of la crème de la crème; he could manage thirty at two tables; and ask up to a hundred to the reception. . . .

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Everything is provisional to Mrs. Van Swinderen's agreement; and I am to lunch there on Friday and hear more. . . .

When Couperus returned to Holland, my correspondence with Teixeira was suspended. We were meeting or communicating by telephone almost daily; and it was only when we left London to stay with friends that the letters were resumed.

Weather hot and stuffy, he writes, 1. 8. 21, from Sutton Courtney. Lawns running down to a perfectly full river and absolutely dry: and I with not much to tell you. . . .

I am sleeping beautifully and eating lightly; and I feel too indolent for words.

Good-bye and bless you!

My wife, he writes, 5. 8. 21, pictures me surrounded by people who, if she broke my heart by dying, would thrust women of forty on me, "dear, dearest Mr. Tex," to look after me. Is it not a beautifully witty tag to a letter? I think so. . . .

To my reproach that he had left London without saying good-bye to me, he replies, 16. 8. 21 with complete justification:

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As our logical neighbours across the channel say:

"Zut! . . . Zut! . . . Et encore zut! . . ."

Had you profited as you ought by the careful bringing up which your kind parents gave you, you would have known that it is for those who go away to say good-bye, for those who arrive to say good-day. You left London before I did. I say no more in reply to your reproaches. . . .

If ever you leave London, however, at about the same time as I, remember, will you not, the etiquette (French) and the punctilio (Italian)? . . .

. . . If you think that I have much to tell you, he adds, 20. 8. 21, you are mistaken. Y'day I went for a stroll, turned up a footpath which I imagined would bring me back here, found that it didn't, after I had gone much too far to turn back, and plodded on and on—my apprehensive mind full of a picture of myself being devoured by onsticelli and stercoraceous geodurpes amid a fine setting of ferns and bracken—until I reached Abingdon. It might have been Oxford, so exhausted was I.

A boy was bribed to fetch me a car and I returned just before the search-party set out for me. I roam no more. There is a lawn here: let me walk up and down it. . . .

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I do not despair about Ireland because I never despair about anything.

And I am ever yours,

Tex.

Your letter of the 23rd, he writes, 25. 8. 21, found me still here. (The Wharf, Sutton Courtney): I go to-morrow to the Norton Priory till Monday . . . and longer if they will have me longer. Then back home; and to Sutro's for a brief week-end on Saturday.

Yes, I know Lancaster, its castle, where I have, and its lunatic asylum, where I have never, stayed. . . .

It were useless for me to pretend that I have not mislaid your list of addresses. I may find it in some other suit; but you might notify me of your next movement whenever you write. But do not translate m. p. h. as miles per hour. Master of phoxhounds, if you like, or miles per horam; but we Englih say an hour and not per hour. . . .

M. sent an enormous 120 h. p. (hocus pocus) land-yacht to meet me at Portsmouth, he writes from Norton Priory, 27. 8. 21, relieving me of the worst part of the journey. . . . N. arrived from town before dinner, bringing with him a . . . stockbroker. . . . They go up on Monday morning, but I stay on till Wednesday, like

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a gay limpet but a perfectly moral: M's brother comes down on Monday.

For the rest, I have the same room, but have not yet cracked my skull against the canopy of the same fourposter; and I am perfectly happy. . . .

Your original waybill is found, he adds, 30. 8. 21.; but I have the receipt of no letter from you to acknowledge. N. . . . went up after breakfast y'day and brother R. M. came down before dinner. He is a pleasant New Zealander and took a lot out of me at bridge.

Life here pursues its quiet course. I accompanied M. and W. to the sea's edge yesterday but found the effort of ploughing through the shingle tolerably exhausting and shall not repeat it to-day. Indeed, the whole family, Miss T. included, are bathing now and I am writing twaddle to you under the pear-tree.

And, as I live, I think I'll write no more. I have no more to say; and the papers have just come. I leave here after lunch (eon) to-morrow, spend an hour or two in Chichester cathedral and arrive home in time for my bread and milk. . . .

On his return to Chelsea and a typewriter, he says, 1. 9. 21:

You will be pleased to receive a letter from me in legible type, instead of in that hand which is

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becoming almost as crabbed as yours. And I continue to address you at Bamborough Castle, though that stronghold figures as something very near Zambuk Castle in your letter of 30 August.

N. filled me with fears of internecine feuds within your fortress, of bloody strife for the one shady nook of the orchard and so on. You say nothing of these things; and I assume that there has been no slaughter in your time. There was a horrid game when I became a British kid in the early seventies: I am king of the castle! Get out, you dirty rascal! I trembled at the thought of you and N. playing this game against ruthless border clansmen. All's well that ends well. . . .

I lost twenty goodish guineas at three-handed bridge after Brother Roy arrived. He wanted to can everything on the estate: the apples, the pears, the fleas on the dogs' backs, the flyaway ducks. He wanted to introduce New Zealand mutton-birds into this country. . . .

I had a tooth out yesterday, he writes, 3. 9. 21,—until then I had thirteen of my own left, an unlucky number—and was not at my best. . . . The tooth was extracted at a high cost, in the presence of a dentist, an anaesthetist and my body-physician but without unpleasant consequences. And this afternoon I go to the Sutros for a brief week-end.

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I have no news, except that I have bought some most attractive socks, or half-hose. . . .

. . . I have no news, he complains, 12. 9. 21. I write to you simply out of friendship and duty. I spent five hours at the Zoo y'day. . . . We lunched there; so did most of the beasts, heavily. You should have seen S. staggering under the weight of about nine pounds of the most expensive oranges, bananas, apples and onions, not to mention sugar, monkey-nuts, and two raw eggs. Say what you will, it is laffable to feed a small monkey with slices of apple till he has both pouches full, all four hands and his mouth. When you hand him the eighth slice, you wait in breathless expectation. . . .

I had a tooth extracted last week, reducing the number of my real teeth to twelve. To-day the number of my pseudo-teeth is to be increased to eighteen (quite correct: they swindle you out of a couple) and I propose to lunch at the Reform Club with many gaps in my mouth.

I have arranged terms for two luvverly rooms at the Tregenna Castle Hotel, St. Ives, from 1 November to 1 April. Rooms face south, away from the beastly ocean; breakfast in the bedroom; baths a volonte. We hope to be well and happy there. I must see much of you before you go to Sweden. . . .

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. . . I rejoice to hear that you are going to Copenhagen. It is a charming coquette of a little city, with which you will fall head over ears in love.

Not to take a second risk, I send this to Crosswood, he writes 13. 9. 21, and I beg you to lay me at the feet of your gracious chatelaine; and, if E. is there, you can give her the love of her Uncle Tex.

At the Reform Club . . . I played a little bridge . . . and won 29/—; then, finding my rate of progress rather slow, I veered off to Cleveland Club and won £7. 12. 0 more. This satisfied me; and I came home, ate two little fillets of sole, some apple-sauce and custard and (damn the expense) a ha'porth of cheese and so to bed.

To complete my Diary of a Nobody, I am glad that you have changed your name from Gowing to Cumming and I am

*ever yours,
Tex.*

Many thanks for your letter of y'day, he writes, 14. 9. 21, bearing traces of the pear skin and plumstones therein mentioned, not to speak of a spot of butter and a small burn from your after-brekker cigarette.

I have crossed Shap in a swift and powerful

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railway-train, with a whiskered and spectacled judge of the high court, in the opposite seat. I remember old Day's teaching me how to observe whether one were going up hill or down by watching the roadside rills:

"Water invariably flows downwards," said he, gravely. . . .

Ecclefechan I don't know and don't want to; Carlisle, I do; Gretna Green I do: I never want to set eyes on either again. I have a desolating memory of brown fields between Carlisle and Gretna Green. By now you have, I expect, seen as much of England as you wish to see in the course of your natural life. . . .

To-day, seized with a sudden lech for art and beauty, my wiff and I are going to Hammersmith to hear The Beggar's Opera. . . .

I have again lost your waybill, he writes, 16. 9. 21, and cannot tell if this will still find you at Glow-worm Castle.

The Beggar's Opera was a great affair.

Little has happened to me since.

But to-day Mrs. Asquith and her daughter are coming to play different forms of the game of auction bridge at the Cleveland Club.

And to-morrow . . . ah, to-morrow! To-morrow I am going to stay for the week-end with a hostess, at or near Marlow, whose name

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I do not even know. . . . I am promised a perfectly good end; but so were any babies of old who ended in being eaten by the ogress.

We are never too old for adventures; but pray that I come safely out of this one.

On 30. 9. 21 he writes:

Very many thanks for The Secret Victory, with the delightful dedication and preface. I am not at all sure that I shall not read the book again.

I have just returned from an interview with the local income-tax brigand which filled me with some apprehensions. . . . After a . . . jest or two, I left the brigand's cave unscathed. . . .

I go to the Wharf to-morrow for a week and may stay on a day or two longer, if pressed: I always do, you know. . . .

I had been invited to deliver some lectures in Sweden and Denmark. Teixeira was good enough to read the manuscript of these, as of almost everything I wrote. With his letter of 3. 10. 21 he returned the first:

Here is your lecture . . . I really cannot suggest any cuts. My one and only lecture read 2¾ minutes: this is no reason why yours should not

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read an hour and a quarter. Does any one want to go and sit in a hall, with free light and warmth thrown in for less than an hour and a quarter? No; the Swedes will admire your fluency and be pleased with you.

On my return to England, he asks,
14. 11. 21:

When do we meet? We have decided to leave on the 30th. I can lunch with you to-morrow, if you like, and bring you your two Ewald books.

Teixeira's departure to Cornwall, already delayed by his wife's illness, had now to be postponed again, as he was prostrated with ptomaine poisoning.

Both invalids were sufficiently recovered to face the journey on 2 December; and, next day, Teixeira sent me news of his safe arrival:

*Tregenna Castle Hotel,
St. Ives, Cornwall,
3 December, 1921.*

My dear Stephen:

Thanks for your letter that reached me just before I left town. This is my address: what else would it be? And the enclosed [an invitation to lecture] is sent to show you that you are

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not the only Beppo on the peach (damn your British metaphors!): you might not believe it otherwise. But you may picture the courteous terms in which I declined.

There is nothing for nervous dyspepsia or gastric horribobblums like seven goodish hours in a swift and powerful railway-express. I have been free from pain or sickness for the first night since Wednesday week. But I slept little. From 1 a. m. onwards I spent a sleepless, painless night.

The hotel is comfortable and commodious in an old-fashioned country-house way; no central heating, but big fires; a certain amount of intrigue with Lizzie the chambermaid to secure a really hot bath: you know the sort of thing; immense grounds, a very park of 100 acres, which I shall never leave, because, if I did, I should never get back: we stand too high.

Bless you.

Ever yours,
Tex.

It was the last letter that I ever received from him; and on Monday, December the fifth, as I was in the middle of answering it, a telegram informed me that he had died that morning. As he was getting up, he collapsed

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in his wife's arms and slipped, unconscious, on the floor. Death was instantaneous and, it may be presumed and hoped, painless. He was buried in the Holy Roman Catholic Cemetery at St. Ives; and a requiem mass for the repose of his soul was said at the Brompton Oratory.

Even those with best cause to suspect how nerveless was his grasp on life could not readily believe that one who loved life so well was to enjoy no more of it. "He was spared old age," said one friend; but to another Tex had lately confessed that he would like to live for ever.

Before he left London, we said good-bye for five months: he was to winter in Cornwall, I in the West Indies. In seeing again the exquisite handwriting of these many hundreds of letters that commemorate our friendship for the last six years of his life, I at least cannot feel that his voice has grown silent or that his laughter is at an end. The big, solemn figure is vividly present; the favourite phrases and the familiar gestures are stamped for ever on the memory of any one that loved him.

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I am writing four thousand miles away from St. Ives: and it may be possible to fancy that he has been ordered to remain there longer than we expected. This time there may be no diary; perhaps the only letters will be those already written; he may seem not to hear all that he once loved hearing; but, wherever he has gone, his personality remains behind.

It was an old-standing bond that the survivor should write of the other. I have tried to make Teixeira paint his own portrait. If his letters have failed to reveal him, what can I add? His literary position is unchallenged; those who knew him how slightly soever knew his humour and wit, his whimsical charm, his understanding and toleration. Those who knew him best had strongest reason for loving him most deeply. Those who knew him not missed knowing a ripe scholar, a fine and tender spirit, a great and gallant gentleman, a matchless companion and the truest friend on earth.

*BERBICE,
BRITISH GUIANA*

15 February, 1922.

